Greening Aid, Shifting Votes:
The Domestic Politics of International Climate Finance

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Abstract

Alongside growing impacts of climate change, countries face political challenges in shifting from fossil fuels to renewables. While opposition from fossil fuel communities is well-documented in rich countries, less is known about impacts outside of these settings—-yet 95% of emissions growth occurs in developing countries. This study explores how international green energy funding to aid-dependent countries can drive domestic political dynamics. Specifically, such funding triggers backlash against domestic political allies of international actors. Using data on the withdrawal of World Bank funding from coal projects in Kosovo applied to a spatial difference-in-differences design, I analyze shifts in voting trends based on party support of international interests. Coal-dependent areas penalize pro-international parties and back pro-coal parties after funding ends, while communities near renewable projects show the reverse. Cross-national analysis reveals similar trends, linking international influence to pro-renewable attitudes.

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1 Introduction

Addressing climate change is one of the most significant political and economic challenges of the modern world. While scientific consensus on the causes and consequences of climate change is strong, the global energy transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy has encountered strong resistance from entrenched political interest groups, particularly in rich, developed countries (Colgan *et al.*, 2021). Barriers to meaningful progress on climate change across countries in the form of collective action dilemmas are second only to barriers *within* countries due to the uneven political distributional effects of reducing reliance on oil and gas (Aklin & Mildenberger, 2020). Fossil fuel industries, communities, and their allies have mobilized against the economic dislocation of the energy transition, creating political barriers for governments hoping to implement climate action (Bosetti *et al.*, 2025; Stokes, 2020). While the responsibility for historical emissions lies with rich, industrialized countries, the majority of new emissions emanate from developing and emerging market economies.

What are the domestic political distributional consequences of the green energy transition in developing countries; and are these dynamics different from those in developed countries? This question becomes increasingly pertinent as developing countries rapidly increase their carbon output alongside economic growth (Olivier *et al.*, 2017). However, research on the politics of decarbonization in these nations lags behind.[1] Similar to developed countries, the green energy transition in developing nations will generate both winners and losers. The concentrated geography of fossil fuels and lower levels of industrialization mean that certain areas in developing countries will bear the brunt of decarbonization's economic impacts more acutely.

The majority of scholarship on climate change mitigation focuses on the industrialized

[1]Notable exceptions include studies by Gaikwad *et al.* (2022) and Gaikwad *et al.* (2025), which reveal that coal communities in India generally support a just energy transition that compensates "losers" for job losses and leverages international funding for decarbonization.

world, particularly the countries responsible for the vast majority of historical emissions. Job losses and perceived threats to established ways of life in fossil fuel communities have inspired political resistance against the green energy transition and its supporters (Bolet *et al.*, 2024; Colgan *et al.*, 2021; Egli *et al.*, 2022; Gaikwad *et al.*, 2022; Gazmararian, 2025; Stokes, 2020). The rise of renewable energy and global attention towards the harms of continued fossil fuel production threaten to eliminate the coal, oil, and gas industries that have long employed geographically concentrated communities in the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Globalization shocks to manufacturing in rich, industrialized countries similarly cause local economic downturns that drive citizens towards conservative, isolationist policies (Autor & Dorn, 2013; Baccini & Weymouth, 2021; Ballard-Rosa *et al.*, 2021; Margalit, 2011; Walter, 2021). The necessity of deindustrialization – shuttering high-pollution factories and energy-inefficient processing facilities – for addressing climate change links the global energy transition to the economic dislocation of communities across the US and Europe.

International funding for the green energy transition shapes domestic politics in developing countries in ways that have no clear parallel in richer countries, where most of the transition is financed domestically. The climate-finance literature has grown rapidly over the last two decades (Kono & Montinola, 2019; Roberts *et al.*, 2009), but it has focused on why rich countries fund mitigation abroad (Clark & Zucker, 2024; Graham & Serdaru, 2020; Michaelowa & Namhata, 2022) rather than on what happens politically once that funding arrives. Because aid-dependent countries cannot finance large energy projects from their own budgets, external donors effectively decide which fossil fuel plants are built or shuttered and which renewables come online — and they cultivate domestic political allies in the process. The transition's local winners and losers are therefore tied not only to a foreign actor but to that actor's domestic partners. Communities harmed when international support for coal is withdrawn penalize the donor's domestic allies and back parties defending fossil fuel use; communities benefiting from international renewable investment do the reverse.

Empirically, I illustrate this dynamic in the case of Kosovo, a lower-middle income country highly dependent on international energy financing, where international actors unexpectedly withdrew their support from a coal plant a year prior to the country's national elections. I use a spatial difference-in-differences design to estimate the effect of the internationally funded energy transition on voter support for political allies and adversaries of the international community. Novel geocoded polling station data shows that polling stations close to coal production have a five-percentage-point-higher vote share for parties that support the development of fossil fuels — a finding that aligns with existing scholarship on the energy transition in rich, industrialized countries — but punish parties with pro-international allegiances with a three-percentage-point decrease in vote share. In communities near renewable energy plants, the pattern reverses: the pro-international party gains two percentage points and the pro-coal party loses four percentage points. Extensive robustness tests support the internal validity of the causal interpretation of these estimates.

While the difference-in-differences design provides strong internal validity, I use cross-national data from across the developing world and two shadow case studies of Indonesia and South Africa to test the study's generalizability. I test the correlation between pro-environmental and pro-international attitudes among citizens and political elites with data from Europe, Asia, and Africa, which consistently show an association between support for environmental issues and international cooperation; international funding for renewable energy increases the strength of this association within developing country political parties. The shadow cases clarify the scope conditions: where international pressure for a green transition maps onto existing cleavages over alignment with foreign donors, those cleavages sharpen, but where no such divide exists, conventional incumbent-backlash dynamics emerge. These elements collectively support the theory that internationally funded energy transitions have distinct political dynamics in developing countries.

Finally, I discuss the implications for the domestic political economy of foreign aid. While

international aid organizations have supported climate mitigation, I demonstrate that the distributional consequences of energy interventions in the political economy of recipient states may cost international actors allies in prospective recipient countries. In 2025 the second Trump administration withdrew funding by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), demonstrating how shifts in foreign aid can disrupt ongoing projects and political alliances. Sudden stoppages of international funding for fossil fuel plants can jumpstart decarbonanization in developing countries, but may also risk alienating local political actors who depend on international support, thereby complicating efforts to build durable coalitions for climate action in developing countries.

This finding unites the foreign aid and climate transition literatures by illustrating the link between lost economic potential and lower support for climate change mitigation amongst energy transition "losers" (Bolet *et al.*, 2024; Gaikwad *et al.*, 2022, 2025; Scoville-Simonds *et al.*, 2020; Zucker, 2022)—as well as increased support for the international community amongst those exposed to renewable energy generation. This is both substantively and theoretically significant: backlash against international allies poses significant barriers to international, top-down efforts for policy changes, particularly climate change mitigation. However, investing in alternative energy sources can stimulate local economies and help counteract this resistance. The geographic distribution of these costs and benefits may change the domestic power dynamics in recipient countries, potentially leading to shifts in environmental and energy policies. This study highlights both the challenges and opportunities of internationally driven climate policies by emphasizing the uneven political effects of donor funding.

2 Foreign aid and the green energy transition

Industrialized countries bear responsibility for the vast majority of carbon emissions historically and currently (Meng *et al.*, 2023). Decarbonization in the developing world is often

seen as coming at a cost of economic development (Gaikwad *et al.*, 2022). Energy poverty in the Global South is a major driver of underdevelopment (Adom *et al.*, 2021) and ramping up energy production in developing countries has been a major priority of international development financing for decades (Munyanyi & Churchill, 2022). Even as foreign aid donors have sought to purse more environmentally friendly policies (Hicks *et al.*, 2008; Michaelowa & Michaelowa, 2011; Michaelowa & Namhata, 2022; Wade, 1997), the growing energy needs of developing countries led both private companies and foreign aid donors to support the power sector with fossil fuel projects.

The power sector is highly visible, economically significant, and, in recent years, highly contested. The need for electricity in developing countries to power industrialization, urbanization, and general development efforts has established power generation as a major priority for donors and recipients alike. For decades, internationally funded fossil fuel plants were the cheapest and most economically beneficial means of recipient country power generation; not only did countries establish stable power supplies, but the energy sector provided steady employment for some local populations (Rafey & Sovacool, 2011). The infrastructure of power plants is a visible signal of government investment and capacity (Marx, 2017)— as is the pollution and health effects generated by fossil fuel plants.

The global turn towards renewable energy offers an alternative power generation strategy in development. The rise in affordability of solar and wind power makes these energy sources a viable option — particularly for developing nations with limited resources. International funding for the energy sector is shifting from fossil fuel investment and maintenance towards renewable energy generation (Hicks *et al.*, 2008). In 2013, the World Bank officially stated that it would limit its financing of coal, citing both its climate impacts and the decreasing cost of alternative renewable energy (Bank, 2013).

Figure 1 show changes in World Bank energy funding from 1955 to 2024. [2] The five-year

[2]I code each project individually to ensure that the measure captures projects aimed at the source of energy

rolling average for energy project funding shows a distinct shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy sources, particularly in the last two decades.

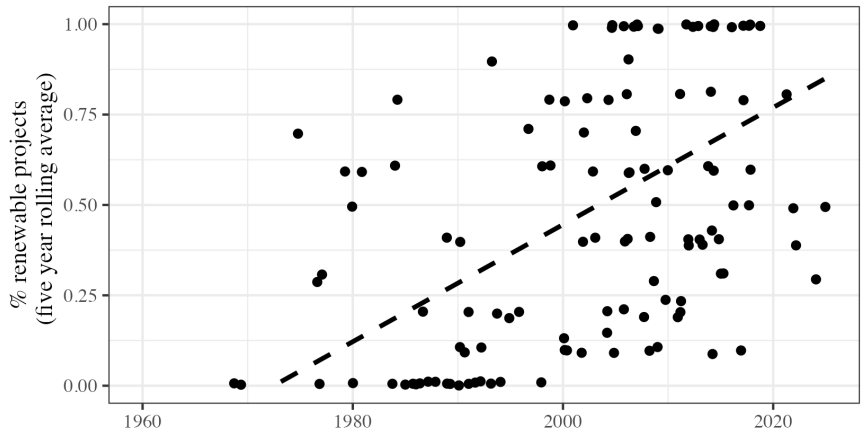


Figure 1: Proportion of World Bank energy projects using renewable sources, five year rolling average: Country-level measures of the proportion of energy projects using renewable sources (compared to fossil fuels) by year; five year rolling average. Dashed black line shows OLS trend. Data on World Bank energy projects collected by author.

While existing work aims to document the increase in foreign aid for environmentally friendly projects (Kono & Montinola, 2019; Michaelowa & Michaelowa, 2011; Roberts *et al.*, 2009), less is known about how reduced international funding for fossil fuels affects international and domestic politics in developing countries. Some domestic dynamics parallel those in rich countries: entrenched fossil fuel interests resist the energy transition (Bolet *et al.*, 2024; Egli *et al.*, 2022; Gazmararian, 2025; Goetz *et al.*, 2019). International funding to increase renewable energy production in Indonesia, for example, has stalled, according to the solar industry, because the government "has a price cap that keeps coal prices artificially low" (NPR, 2023). In addition, an international deal to wean Indonesian's economy off of coal plants has created opportunities for political selection of which plants are still allowed to operate as many of the country's elite have close ties to coal (NPR, 2023). Other dynam-

generation. Projects focusing more generally on the power sector, for example, projects that focus on rehabilitating a country's energy grid or more energy-efficient insulation for housing, are excluded from this particular analysis.

ics are more acute in developing contexts: energy poverty is a huge retardant for economic growth. As poorer countries face stricter budget constraints, these countries are less likely to have the political will to decommission existing fossil fuel plants or abandon local fossil fuel resources given dire needs for energy generation (Bos & Gupta, 2019). And, as Bush & Clayton (2023) describe in for gendered climate differences, the status benefits of the fossil fuel industry are less embedded in national imaginations in developing than industrialized nations, likely due to the historical colonial extractive industries that characterized many poorer countries (Barak, 2020). While rich countries have longstanding extractive industries with concentrated geographies (Baccini & Weymouth, 2021) and political power (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2006; Iversen *et al.*, 2010), leading to a union of pro-fossil fuel labor and capital (Mildenberger, 2020; Stokes, 2020), the process of fossil-fuel-dependent industrialization in developing countries is both more recent and less directed by local actors. Instead, investment in carbon-intensive sectors has been led by the state with support from international financiers (Dolšak & Prakash, 2022; Hochstetler, 2020). Carbon economies in developing countries are structurally and socially distinct from those in the industrialized nations that the bulk of our theories of decarbonization were developed for (Grossman *et al.*, 2026; Ross, 2025) – the continued salience of power generation for poverty alleviation and pivotal role of external and state financing in developing grid capacity challenge the notion that fossil fuel industries and identities are the primary driving force in decarbonization politics outside of the Global North.

Unlike in many developed countries where individuals are often (rationally) unaware of foreign economic policy (Guisinger & Saunders, 2017; Rho & Tomz, 2017), people in poor countries are highly attuned to international economic flows that more directly shape individuals' economic welfare. Dolan & Milner (2023) demonstrate that individuals in developing countries are particularly politically sophisticated in their understandings of international influence on domestic economies. In aid-dependent contexts , recipients pay close attention

to the presence (or absence) of aid projects (Baldwin & Winters, 2020; Cheeseman *et al.*, 2024; Clark *et al.*, 2023). Citizens have preferences for how involved donors are in the aid delivery process (Baldwin & Winters, 2020) and political conditions of aid (Clark *et al.*, 2023) that come from exposure to and knowledge of aid projects. Almost a third of all press articles in Senegal, for example, addressed the topic of development; of these, seventy percent focused on non-governmental and/or international development initiatives (Lemke, 2018). Politicians advertise their involvement with aid projects, heightening general public awareness, to claim additional credit for the provision of these goods (Baldwin & Winters, 2023; Dolan, 2020; Ijaz, 2020; Young, 2009). In Zambia, President Hakainde Hichilema has publicly touted links to Chinese investors in its critical minerals sector as a means of decreasing the country's reliance on Western debt (Associated Press, 2024; Zeitz, 2019)). This again contrasts with the politics of international economics in Western countries even highly salient trade shocks are politically activating for only a small set of the public that is directly impacted (Margalit, 2011).

Political parties may have incentives to shift blame onto the international community, which can undermine the legitimacy of donor efforts in the eyes of citizens affected by aid withdrawal (Grossman *et al.*, 2018; Gruffydd-Jones, 2019; Terman, 2019). This delegitimization can create obstacles for international interventions in recipient countries, especially if local populations oppose donor involvement and limit donor influence over political decisions in recipient countries. Discrediting one donor could also create opportunities for other donors—who may have differing levels of commitment to environmental concerns—to increase their influence (Blair *et al.*, 2022; Dunning, 2004; Kohno *et al.*, 2021).

When donors use aid to encourage policy changes in recipient countries that align with their own priorities (Morgenthau, 1962), citizens in those countries respond based on their own interests—both in terms of policy outcomes and the capacity of politicians to implement them. In aid-dependent nations, continuing investment in fossil fuels may mean losing sup-

port from the international community, while parties and politicians advocating for renewable energy often rely on international backing to realize their policy objectives. Pro-climate parties in developing countries tend to have greater credibility and effectiveness when connected to international funding sources. Conversely, parties supporting fossil fuel policies are less likely to maintain strong relationships with donors promoting a green energy transition. Citizens who bear the costs of this transition may gravitate toward more regressive parties with fewer international ties (Voeten, 2024). Similarly, those who benefit from the shift to green energy are more likely to support environmentally focused parties, particularly those closely linked to international donors.

Before the shift towards green energy, political parties were motivated to take credit or provide support for fossil fuel initiatives that were financed by entities such as the World Bank and the United States (Cruz & Schneider, 2017; Marx, 2017).[3] Political parties in countries that rely heavily on aid often modify their energy policy priorities in reaction to changes in international donor funding, given the significant impact of such funding on the energy sector. This is especially true as the global emphasis transitions from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. Since major energy infrastructure projects are highly dependent on external financial support, alterations in donor priorities can directly determine which projects are able to move forward. The electorate reacts to these changes based on anticipated gains or losses: individuals who are negatively impacted by the withdrawal of aid tend to back parties that oppose the donors' decisions, whereas those who stand to benefit from the new donor priorities are more likely to support parties that align with the new international agenda.

In the context of climate transitions, communities geographically or environmentally suited for renewable energy investments are likely to benefit more from international disinvestment in fossil fuels. Changes in donor funding not only reflect shifting priorities but

[3]In developing nations, foreign direct investment in the energy sector is a crucial source of capital but frequently relies on loan guarantees from multilateral development banks to secure loans for projects which might not qualify for credit under normal circumstances (Group *et al.*, 2016).

also reshape political competition by enabling alternative projects to gain prominence when previous projects lose support. In essence, the theory links international donor funding shifts to domestic political party behavior and voter preferences, emphasizing how external aid dynamics influence internal policy competition and electoral outcomes during energy transitions. Two hypotheses emerge from these theoretical expectations.

H1: Energy transition "losers" decrease (increase) support for parties linked to international donors (support for anti-international actors).

H2: Energy transition "winners" increase (decrease) support for parties linked to international donors (support for anti-international actors).

3 Study context

Kosovo, a small Balkan nation with a population of 1.2 million and a history of economic and security reliance on the United States and the European Union, was the proposed site for a coal plant described by international media as "the real test" of the World Bank's 2013 commitment to end coal funding in developing countries (Washington Post, 2013; Reuters, 2013). The project, intended to replace two aging coal plants in the region, received support from local politicians due to its potential economic benefits, including stable electricity supply and job creation. Global media reports indicated that the plant's construction would create 10,000 new jobs, with 500 permanent positions for ongoing operations (Reuters, 2015).[4] In remarks to a major news outlet, an advisor to the Prime Minister inflated these numbers to "20,000 jobs and 1.3 billion investments" (KOHA.net, 2018b). A widely circulated

[4]Analysts estimate that the claim is overestimated: "no more than about 1600 workers should be required during the construction stage – and many of them are likely to be imported specialists – while no more than 200 should be required during operation." (Ciută & Gallop, 2016, 24).

Facebook post by the Minister of Economic Development highlighted the role of the new coal plant in the "creation of a competitive market and creation of new jobs in the energy sector" (KOHA.net, 2018a). However, in 2018—twelve years after initially pledging support—the World Bank withdrew its funding, citing the declining costs of renewable energy, which challenged coal's long-term economic viability in Kosovo. This unexpected reversal of international energy funding provides a quasi-natural experiment to examine how shifts in global green energy financing impact domestic politics in recipient countries.

In the wake of the withdrawal, the three major political parties in Kosovo diverged on their approaches to the withdrawal of international support for the power plant. The incumbent party, Partia Demokratike e Kosovës (henceforth *pro-coal party*), campaigned on promises of moving forward with the project despite lack of international support. The party, which emerged from the Kosovo Liberation Army in the wake of the country's independence from Serbia, has long touted the importance of energy independence as a national security issue (Visoka & Richmond, 2017). The ruling party's Ministry of Economic Development released a statement stating that "Kosova e Re will contribute to the economic and social development of Kosovo, will eliminate dependence on imports and the ongoing losses in the economy as a result of the lack of energy," reiterating the 10,000 jobs the construction of the plant would create, and emphasizing "hundreds of long-term jobs" in the plant's operation (Epoka e Re, 2019). A pro-Western, internationally supported party, Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës (henceforth, *pro-international party*), tacitly accepted the withdrawal while pledging future investment in renewable energy (Visoka & Musliu, 2019).[5] The international party has historically appealed to international donors from its initial nonviolent resistance to Serbian aggression to its support from the Kosovar diaspora. A third party, Vetëvendosje (henceforth *non-aligned party*), emerged from a wartime coalition called the "Movement

[5]The party specifically pledged to build new energy capacities only if the price of electricity would not also rise; Kosovo's contract with ContourGlobal was estimated to increase short-term energy costs (Ekonomia Online, 2019).

for Self-Determination" and known for its anti-elite and anti-international rhetoric, opposed building the plant even before the international community withdrew its support, going as far as to publish a list of reasons why the government should not support the power plant as part of its political platform. (Visoka & Musliu, 2019; Ahmeti, 2019) The parties' positions on energy in Kosovo became salient in 2019 when the governing coalition collapsed and parliamentary elections were set for October, roughly one year after the World Bank's announced funding withdrawal.[6]

The 2019 election did not center on energy concerns; while these were noted in party platforms, corruption and institutional reform were the primary focus of political debate in the lead-up to the elections. The non-aligned party handily won the 2019 election — primarily at the expense of the pro-coal party — and formed a ruling coalition with the pro-international party (Balkan Insight, 2019b). In 2020, the company contracted with building the coal plant withdrew from the project, citing lack of government support as a primary reason (Gallop, 2020). While the current national energy strategy aims to increase the share of energy generated from renewables to 35% in the next decade, two coal plants remain operational in the country and face both political and economic barriers to decommissioning; in the words of one Kosovan climate expert, "If we want to shut down [the coal plant], there will be many workers saying 'you're taking our jobs, where will electricity come from?'" (Xharra & Zeqiri, 2024) This political and economic context sets the stage for understanding how shifts in international funding for energy infrastructure influence local political dynamics.

3.1 Identification strategy

I use a spatial difference-in-differences design to identify the causal effect of international funding for energy on the domestic politics in recipient states. The units of analysis are

[6]While Kosovo has dozens of political parties, I focus on those which were most competitive during and immediately prior to the time period of interest. Appendix 6 traces the decision-making process of each individual party in developing energy positions.

polling station-election. People in communities close to energy sources are considered treated while communities further from energy are considered the control group; the treatment is activated in 2018 when the World Bank withdraws its support for the coal plant.

I put together a novel dataset of geolocated polling stations in Kosovo from 2010-2021.[7] In total, I observe 921 polling stations across five national elections (2010, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2021). I geolocate each polling station using the stated name of the municipality, town or city, and physical building where the poll is located.[8] This method captures the proximity of the population voting in a given polling station in relation to industrial sites of interest. All polling stations are depicted in a map of Kosovo on Figure 2. As Kosovo uses a closed-list proportional representation system, equal weight is applied to votes across the country.[9]

Data on the location of energy plants and energy-industry-adjacent mines are sourced from domestic and international official documents. Locations from renewable energy plants (wind and solar) are sourced from a report commissioned by USAID in 2021 (Renewable Energy Sources Kosovo, 2022) and the annual reports of Kosovo's Energy Regulatory Office (Energy Regulatory Office of Kosovo, 2016). Figure 2 shows the location of each energy source and mine by type of energy; Appendix Table 14 details each of the plants. Descriptive statistics in Table 1 show polling station and municipal-level characteristics. The analyzed sample includes all polling stations in Kosovo, manually geolocated by the author, and covariates from the Kosovo Central Election Commission.[10]

The World Bank's withdrawal of support for the new coal plant represents an exogenous

[7]Polling station-level electoral results are only available from 2010 onwards from the Kosovo Central Election Commission.

[8]Polling stations for rural voting areas are often located in the closest city — rural voters then travel to the nearest urban area to cast their ballots. I attain the coordinates for the location (town, city neighborhood) of the population in these cases rather than the physical building.

[9]Ethnic minorities are guaranteed twenty seats in the 120-member parliament (Landau, 2017); the other 100 seats are allocated proportionally to the national vote.

[10]A number of polling stations were added for the 2017 elections. These polling stations are included in the main specifications but results are robust to their exclusion (see Appendix Table 10).

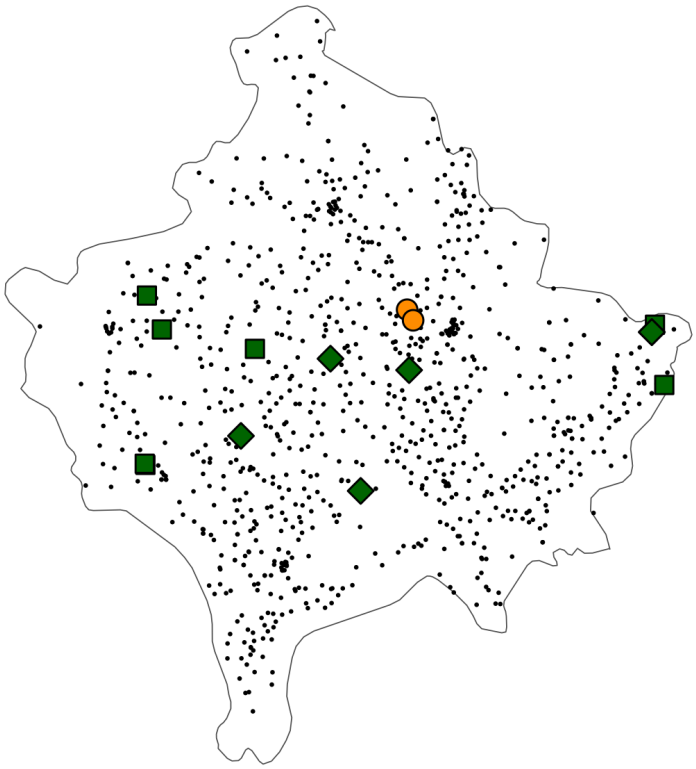


Figure 2: Energy source and polling station locations in Kosovo active in 2019: Small black dots indicate polling station locations. Orange circles represent coal mining and refining plants, green squares nickel mining, green diamonds solar plants, and green triangles wind.

shock to Kosovo's political environment. I use two sources of variation to analyze this shock: (1) voters' proximity to energy sources and (2) political party platforms on energy and international cooperation. Before the World Bank pulled funding, voters both near and far from energy sources expected no change in Kosovo's energy policy, as the World Bank's support guaranteed coal as the lowest-cost energy option. The withdrawal of coal funding creates energy insecurity nationwide[11] and breaks the World Bank's prior commitment to the country. While all voters are affected by the loss of the future power plant—both in terms of information and increased energy costs—those living near energy sources experience a greater

[11]In 2018, 80% of Kosovo's electricity was generated by coal from the two existing coal power plants (International Energy Agency, 2025).

Polling station covariates	Min	Max	Mean	N
Vote share: Pro-international party	0	0.7340426	0.2145138	3731
Vote share: Pro-coal party	0	0.9798206	0.271589	3731
Vote share: Non-aligned party	0	0.7931034	0.1898546	3731
Total votes	0	7810	1041.413	3731
# elections	1	5	4.113561	921
Distance from coal	0.862	193.472	43.667	921
Distance from renewable	0.575	199.711	60.119	921
Municipal covariates				
Temperature	273.267	281.3909	278.9486	190
Particulates	14.84199	27.10273	20.50494	190
Population	1795.07	224318.1	82332.61	190
Nighttime lights	0.05903931	9.083917	1.114262	190

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

impact due to changes in local employment opportunities resulting from the defunding.

The loss of guaranteed funding suddenly made relevant cleavages in party platforms that previously had not been salient. The pro-international party pledged to solve the country's energy crises with internationally funded renewable energy while the pro-coal party aimed to find additional funding to complete the coal plant. The non-aligned party supported renewable energy, but not the international cooperation required to fund it. These party platforms are uniform across the country: parties do not make different promises about national energy policy in different municipalities.The parties also differ on a number of other dimensions; for example the non-aligned party campaigned on an anti-corruption platform while the pro-coal party touted its historic representation of war heroes from the Kosovo Liberation Army (Balkan Insight, 2019a). However, the crucial assumption for causal identification is that the parties' platforms on energy policy are particularly salient to voters who are most materially affected by changes in these policies.

An important assumption in the empirical strategy is that these two sources of variation are insignificant prior to the treatment (World Bank withdrawal of funding). Pre-treatment

patterns in voting behavior for each party in voters close to energy projects in comparison to voters further from energy projects prior to World Bank withdrawal assures us that we are comparing like to like. Figures in Appendix B confirm that voters close to and far from energy projects were not subject to pre-trends that threaten inference.

Party	Expected effect of withdrawal (vote share)	
	Coal community	Renewable communities
Pro-coal	Increase	Decrease
Pro-international	Decrease	Increase
Non-aligned	No change	No change

Table 2: Party positions: Support for coal and international cooperation by political party.

Theoretically, I expect voters for whom changes in energy production are economically significant to be particularly attentive to the loss of coal funding. Physical proximity to energy production is commonly used in the political economy literature in developing and advanced economies to proxy for differential exposure to policies (e.g. Baccini & Weymouth (2021); Isaksson (2020); Jablonski (2014); Knutsen *et al.* (2017)). Voters reliant on coal for jobs should disproportionately support parties that aim to continue with fossil fuel production. As the international community has broadly proclaimed its support for renewable energy, these voters are likely to oppose parties with close ties to the international community. In contrast, voters who expect to benefit from renewable energy should be more likely to support the international party given its support for renewables and its backing by the international community—and should oppose pro-coal parties. The non-aligned party, which does not support coal but also does not align with the international community, is unlikely to receive support from renewable voters given the party's inability to secure funding from donors and also unlikely to gain ground with coal voters given its anti-fossil fuel position. This party therefore offers analytical leverage for distinguishing the mechanisms driving voting preferences. Table 2 depicts the positions of each party with regard to the withdrawal

of the plant and the international community as well as empirical expectations.

I estimate the following model for each party vote share separately:

$$Vote\_share_{it} = \beta_1 Close_i + \beta_2 Post2018_t + \beta_3 Close * Post2018_{it} + \alpha_i + \delta_t + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

where i is an individual polling station and t is an election year. Our coefficient of interest is β_3 for the interaction term of close polling stations in the years after the withdrawal of World Bank funding. α_i and δ_t are polling station and time fixed effects, specifically. In robustness tests, I control for a vector of covariates measured at the municipal level (See Appendix Table 16). Close is defined as 15 kilometers from an energy source in the main models.[12]

3.2 Results

I estimate the difference in the change in vote share for each major political party after the World Bank's 2018 withdrawal of support from the power plant for polling stations close to and far from 1) fossil fuel production and 2) renewable energy production.[13] Tables 3 and 4 display the main results. Models 1-3 show the effects of withdrawal on party vote share for polling stations within 15 km of fossil fuel production. Models 7-9 show the effects amongst polling stations within 15km of renewable energy. The second set of results

[12]Kosovo occupies an area of 10,887 kilometers (roughly the size of Connecticut). A circle with a radius of 15 kilometers covers about 6% of the surface area of the nation. This is a stricter restriction on geographic exposure compared to the existing literature, which applies a 50km bandwidth (Briggs, 2019), but one that more appropriately approximates the exposure of individuals to energy projects. The modal distance that an individual travels by bus, car, and taxi, the predominant means of commuting to work, in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, is 1-5 kilometers (Humolli *et al.*, 2020). For more rural areas, this distance increases. The initial bandwidth of 15 kilometers balances exposure to energy projects with statistical power, as fewer polling stations are included in a lower (5km) bandwidth.

[13]When major parties run in coalitions with other parties, I use the vote share of the coalition as the outcome. This reporting only occurs when coalitions are formed prior to the election, not post-electoral coalitions. In all other circumstances, the party's vote share is reported.

Panel A: Full sample	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Post-2018 x Proximity	-0.032***	0.056***	0.016**
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)
	[0.009]	[0.012]	[0.009]
Num.Obs.	5128	5115	5069
R2	0.883	0.880	0.863
R2 Adj.	0.858	0.854	0.833
Panel B: Subsets	**Pro-Intl.**	**Pro-Coal**	**Non-aligned**
	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-2018 x Proximity	-0.026***	0.045***	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
	[0.011]	[0.011]	[0.011]
Num.Obs.	4016	4005	3972
R2	0.883	0.905	0.867
R2 Adj.	0.857	0.884	0.837

Table 3: Coal difference-in-differences results: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses; Conley standard errors in brackets. Panel A show results for the full sample of polling stations. Panel B subsets the sample to polling stations not in proximity to the alternative energy source (no renewable proximity) to avoid overestimating the effects of withdrawal.

replicates these findings excluding polling stations within 15km of the rival energy source — fossil fuel communities are compared to non-renewable communities in Models 4-6 and vis-a-versa for Models 10-12. All models include polling station and year fixed effects and cluster standard errors at the polling station level. Robust standard errors reported in parentheses; Conley standard errors reported in brackets.

Table 3 supports the primary argument of the paper: communities close to fossil fuel disproportionately support pro-coal parties and oppose pro-international parties. The opposite is true for communities close to renewable sources in Table 4, who oppose pro-coal and support pro-international parties. The party with cross-cutting platforms—anti-coal

Panel A: Full sample	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
	(7)	(8)	(9)
Post-2018 x Proximity	0.027***	-0.049***	-0.035***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)
	[0.010]	[0.009]	[0.014]
Num.Obs.	5128	5115	5069
R2	0.883	0.880	0.864
R2 Adj.	0.858	0.854	0.835
Panel B: Subsets	**Pro-Intl.**	**Pro-Coal**	**Non-aligned**
	(10)	(11)	(12)
Post-2018 x Proximity	0.023***	-0.041***	-0.034***
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.006)
	[0.010]	[0.009]	[0.015]
Num.Obs.	4309	4308	4252
R2	0.879	0.859	0.858
R2 Adj.	0.852	0.828	0.827

Table 4: Renewable plant difference-in-differences results: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses; Conley standard errors in brackets. Panel A show results for the full sample of polling stations. Panel B subsets the sample to polling stations not in proximity to the alternative energy source (no coal proximity) to avoid overestimating the effects of withdrawal.

and anti-international—sees a small, borderline-significant change in vote share (increased support in coal communities; decreased support in renewable) but this result is not robust to alternative specifications. The lack of consistent effects for the non-aligned party suggests that environmental policies alone do not explain voting patterns. Instead, it is the combination of pro-environmental and pro-international cooperation stances that reflects parties' commitment and capacity to advance renewable energy initiatives in developing countries. The results hold when correcting for spatial autocorrelation between polling station locations.

One potential threat to inference is the existence of pre-election coalitions in Kosovo's national elections. I use a synthetic difference-in-differences model (Arkhangelsky *et al.*, 2019) to adjust for this issue. The synthetic difference-in-differences method is appropriate here because of its ability to differentially weight time periods (using time period fixed effects). Three parties formed a pre-election coalition in the third time period in the study (2017), with the internationalist party and a third party forming a second pre-election coalition, and therefore the parties in this period receive a higher vote share than as a coalition than they otherwise would have in running as individual parties (see Appendix Table 19). Mechanically, we should expect parties *without* coalitions to receive fewer votes due to smaller constituent bases; the drop in the pro-coal party's vote share in 2019 and 2021 overall could be related to both their performance and the absence of coalition partners. With synthetic differences-in-differences, we can algorithmically upweight periods in the pre-trends that are more similar to the post-treatment period and down-weight exceptionally different periods. This method is more appropriate than the synthetic control method for the study at hand because the synthetic control uses unweighted treatment period averages which cannot account for the aforementioned changes in electoral coalitions.

The synthetic difference-in-differences substantively replicate the results of the main tests: the pro-international party sees a relative increase in vote share amongst renewable communities and decrease amongst fossil fuel communities. The pro-coal party sees the opposite

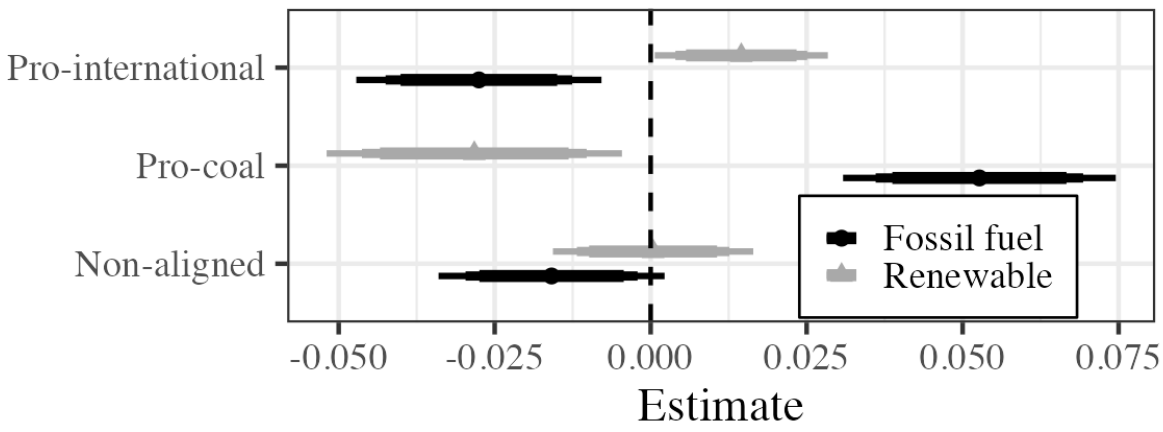


Figure 3: Synthetic difference-in-differences: Coefficients for the interaction term, ***Post-2018*Proximity****, using a 15km bandwidth of exposure (****Proximity****). 90, 95, and 99% confidence intervals depicted. Six separate models estimated by party and energy source.*

effect: fossil fuel communities increase their relative support for the pro-coal party and renewable communities decrease their support, relative to other communities. The non-aligned party does not have substantive or significant difference in support in the renewable community but does see a decrease in support within the fossil fuel community. Across all specifications, the results are consistent with voter awareness of the distributive effects of the energy transition and the international community's new role in funding renewable energy.

Figure 4 shows placebo tests for the main models. I randomly select sets of coordinates within Kosovo as placebo locations for fossil fuel plants and renewable plants and rerun OLS regressions for vote share of polling stations near these locations, compared to further locations, for each political party. The placebo tests evaluate the possibility of spurious geographic correlation driving the results: if a substantial number of geographic areas in Kosovo produce the same estimated effect as the actual fossil fuel or renewable communities, the main models would be incorrect. Instead, the placebo tests are consistent with the theory that the fossil fuel and renewable communities responded distinctly to the political parties' positions in response to the loss of the coal plant.

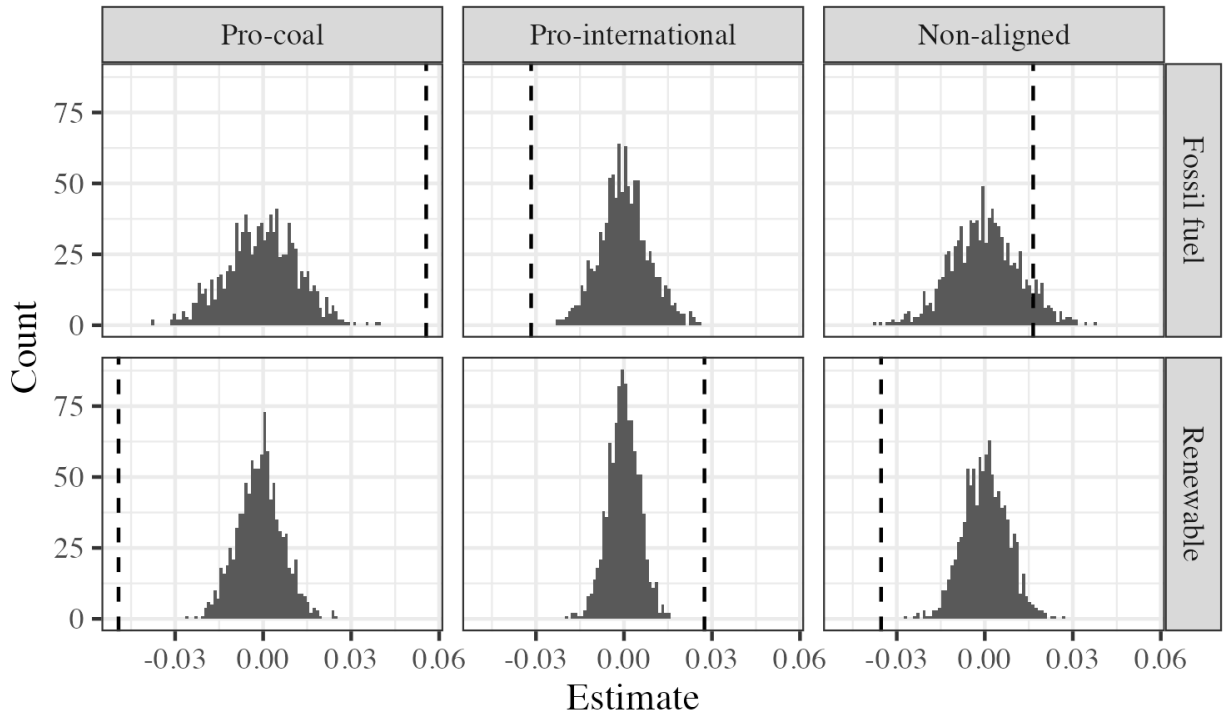


Figure 4: Placebo tests: Histograms for 1000 randomly selected sets of coordinates as treatment groups; coefficients for the interaction term, ***Post-2018*Proximity****, using a 15km bandwidth of exposure (****Proximity****) and OLS with polling station fixed effects. Three separate models estimated by party: Pro-coal is the leftmost column, pro-international the center, and non-aligned the rightmost. Top panel estimates models where (placebo) fossil fuel communities are the treated group; bottom panel (placebo) renewable communities. Vertical dashed line shows main model coefficient.*

The results are robust to a number of different specifications. Appendix Figure 11 reruns both the fossil fuel and renewable models with additional smaller and larger bandwidths—measures of closeness to energy plants— and the results remain substantively the same across exposure distances. Alternative models using total number of votes for a party, rather than party vote share, as an outcome, replicate the main results substantively and significantly (see Appendix Table 7). Removing polling stations closest to energy plants—creating a ring of polling stations between 5km and 15km from the plants—also replicates the main results; see Appendix Table 11. Additional tests account for anticipatory investment in renewable energy: it is possible that voters in municipalities with high photovoltaic output or wind power potential would be aware of future plans for renewable energy in their localities through site visits by engineers, international development officials, and political figures. Indeed, municipalities suitable for renewable investment follow the same patterns as locations close to existing renewable energy plants (see Appendix Table 12). Appendix Table 14 decomposes the energy sources into individual plants and specific energy sources.

3.3 Alternative mechanisms

The results are consistent with a theory of developing country energy transitions in which voters care about both the *policy* of political representatives towards renewable energy and the *linkages* to an international community with the funds to implement the proposed energy policies. The material interests of voters in poor countries are tied to support from international actors — and I argue that it is through these economic links to energy generation that voters respond to donor shifts towards renewable investment.

However, several alternative mechanisms could explain the link between donor withdrawal from fossil fuels and domestic politics. First, pollution from the coal plant could drive political behavior. The plant was intended to replace an existing plant, one of Europe's

dirtiest coal plants. Voters close to the coal plant could disproportionately support pro-coal party in order to prevent further local environmental damage from the continuation of the existing plant. If environmental preferences are mainly local—residents near the polluting plant want a cleaner replacement while those living elsewhere prefer a full shift to renewables—then lower pollution exposure experienced by voters near renewable facilities would likely *not* alter their political preferences following the World Bank's withdrawal from fossil fuel funding. Instead, results from polling stations in the vicinity of renewable energy plants show clear increased support for the pro-international party, the party associated with no further continuation of the coal project. Appendix H additionally identifies the prevalence of major media coverage of coal, renewables, and environmental issues across the country: coal-adjacent areas sees disproportionate coverage of the coal plant, but not of renewable energy or pollution.

Second, other local economic features such as electric grid pressure and labor migration could drive results. In the aggregate, cities, a proxy for high-energy demand locations, are more likely to vote for the pro-coal and against the pro-international party, in line with preferences for stable electric prices (see Appendix Figure 12). However, differences *across* cities remain unexplained by price alone.[14] Concerns of labor reallocation in response to the coal discontinuation are also unfounded: individuals in the coal county commute to work in less than 20 minutes on average and inter-municipal migration is lower than 100 individuals in a given year (Appendix D). The location of polling stations does not change over time, reducing the likelihood that polls are endogenously (re)located around energy projects based on political interference (Appendix Figure 26).

Fourth, Kosovo's long conflict with Serbia might affect voter preferences. Serbian citizens of Kosovo could differ in their support for energy independence due to loyalty to the Serbian

[14]Kosovo has a single electrical grid and therefore no geographic differences in accessibility of energy due to installed capacity.

state and its leverage over Kosovo's energy supply. I test for the potentially confounding effect of Serbian voters in Appendix Table 15: results hold in models which remove Serbian municipalities from the analysis.

Fifth, alternative international financing for fossil fuel plants could alter donor decisions to withdraw support for coal and recipient country domestic politics post-withdrawal (Cheeseman *et al.*, 2024; Kohno *et al.*, 2020; Swedlund, 2017). Donor competition for projects undermines the capacity of a single funder to make unilateral decisions about recipient country policies (Blair *et al.*, 2022; Dunning, 2004). However, the unique geopolitical position of Kosovo insulates the country from rival donor politics: China, Russia, and the Gulf States do not have a strong presence in the country due to the influence of Western donors who guarantee the physical and economic security of Kosovo (Bartlett, 2021; Visoka, 2017, 2019). Even the anti-international political parties in the country do not claim a willingness or ability to entertain alternative international influence from China and Russia (Yabanci, 2016); China also transitioned to supporting renewable energy in line with its domestic economic concerns (Wang *et al.*, 2024; Ma & Ma, 2023). Finally, the plant's economic inviability reduces its appeal to foreign financiers. The long-term return on investment for the new coal plant was deemed unacceptable to the most favorable lender, the World Bank; private and alternative lenders were therefore unlikely to step in.

Lastly, information about withdrawal could lead to public backlash. Observationally, this mechanism cannot be ruled out; geographically unconstrained vote shifting across the country is possible. However, even in the case of informational effects, the *geographic* winners and losers from the withdrawal disproportionately vote for the pro-international and anti-coal party, respectively. Ideational backlash would also increase support for the non-aligned party, which explicitly blamed the World Bank—empirically the non-aligned party sees no change in its vote share. The *direction* of backlash to aid withdrawal also does not bear out empirically: blame for withdrawal directed at the incumbent party should cause lower vote

share amongst areas most affected by the withdrawal. Instead, the incumbent (pro-coal) party *gains* vote share in this population.

3.4 Generalizability

The case of the World Bank's withdrawal from coal in Kosovo is uniquely suited to test the effects of international donor funding for the green energy transition in aid-dependent nations. I ensure that the Kosovo case is not overly specific by first examining how the salience and correlation between pro-environment and pro-international attitudes in other developing contexts. Then, I demonstrate the bounds of the theory in shadow cases of Indonesia and South Africa:

3.4.1 Environmentalism and internationalism in the developing world

Is the link between pro-environmental attitudes and pro-international attitudes unique to Kosovo? Existing research suggests that the two are often bundled together in rich, industrialized nations (Voeten, 2025), but less is known about their association in developing contexts. Drawing from three cross-national surveys fielded across Europe (Life in Transition Survey, or LITS), Africa (Afrobarometer), and Asia (Asian Barometer) from 2005 to 2022, I compare individual respondents' attitudes towards climate change and international cooperation. Figure 5 shows the association between pro-climate attitudes (primarily proxied by concern about climate change's impacts) and pro-international cooperation attitudes. To account for differences in question phrasing and outcome scale over surveys and time, I transform all estimates into standard deviations for comparability.

Across all surveys in all years, pro-climate attitudes are positively associated with pro-international attitudes. These results align with existing work on pro-environmental and pro-non-governmental attitudes as determinants of pro-climate action in China, India, Germany, and the United States (Davino *et al.*, 2019) and suggest that the empirical patterns in Kosovo

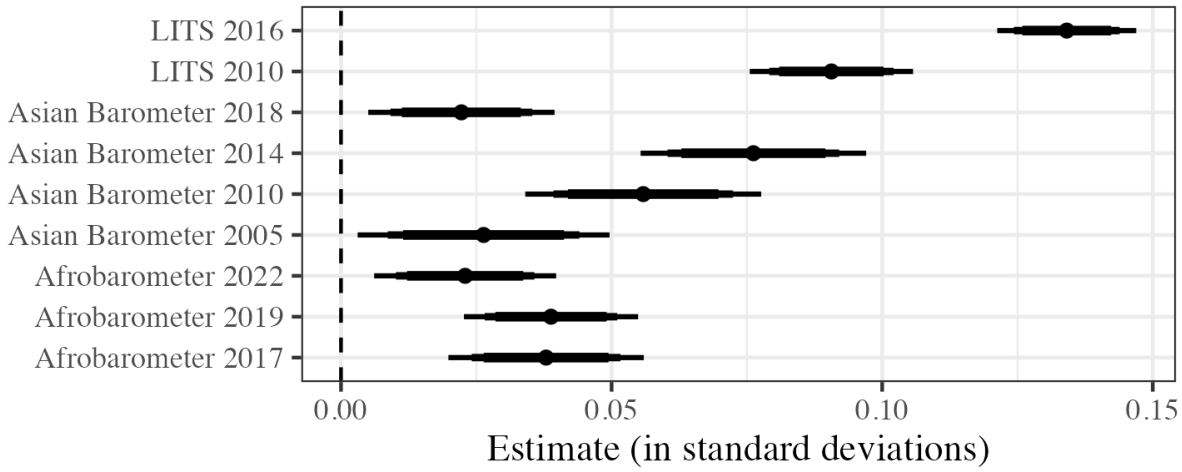


Figure 5: Public opinion on climate change and pro-international orientation: OLS estimates for association between climate concern and pro-international orientation. Pro-international orientation is proxied by trust in NGOs (LITS 2010 and 2016), perceptions of corruption in NGOs (Asian Barometer; Afrobarometer 2017 and 2021), and support for freedom of movement (Afrobarometer 2019).

generalize to other developing countries.

Does this pattern extend to politicians in developing countries? Drawing from data on political party platforms in low- and lower-middle income countries from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Lehmann, 2024), Figure 6 shows the association between political parties' stances on environmentalism (higher values = pro-environment) and positive stances on international cooperation. Parties in low and lower-middle income countries highly correlate on measures of pro-environmental and pro-international policy preferences ($t - stat = 0.17$).

Is the relationship between environmentalism and internationalism in party platforms related to foreign aid? The top panel of figure 7 shows that parties in countries that have received World Bank fossil fuel projects in the prior five years don't link pro-environmental to pro-international attitudes ($t - stat = 0.06$) while parties in countries with renewable projects have a strong association between the two policy platforms ($t - stat = 0.38$). The bottom panel shows that one World Bank renewable energy project in the last five years increases a party's support for environmentalism by 0.6 pts ($mean = 3.8$) and internation-

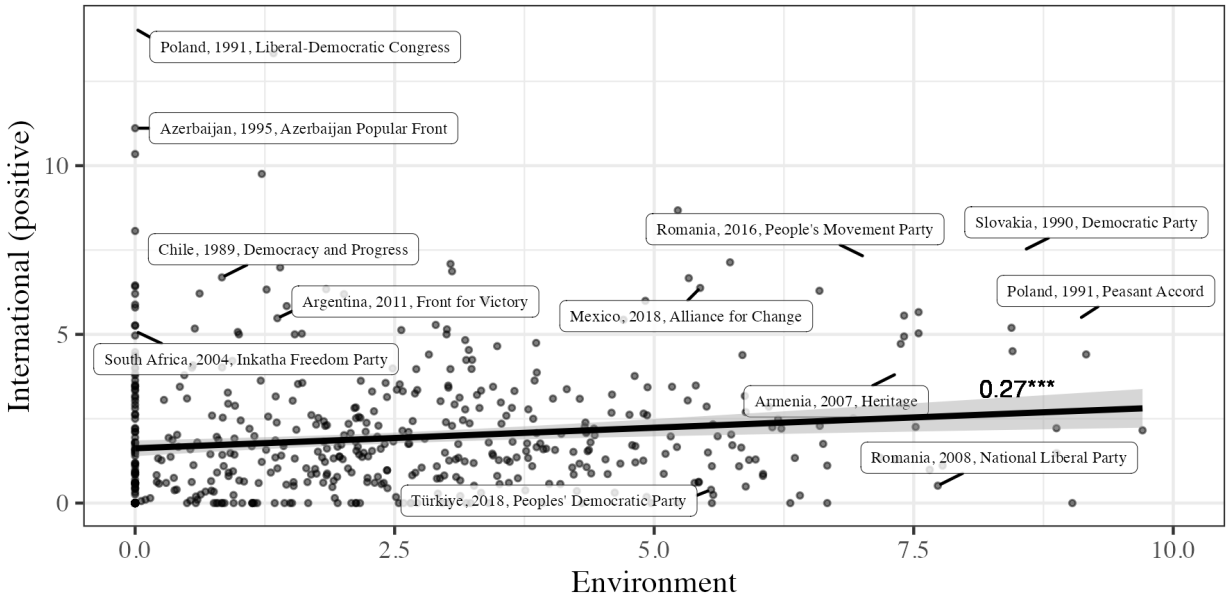
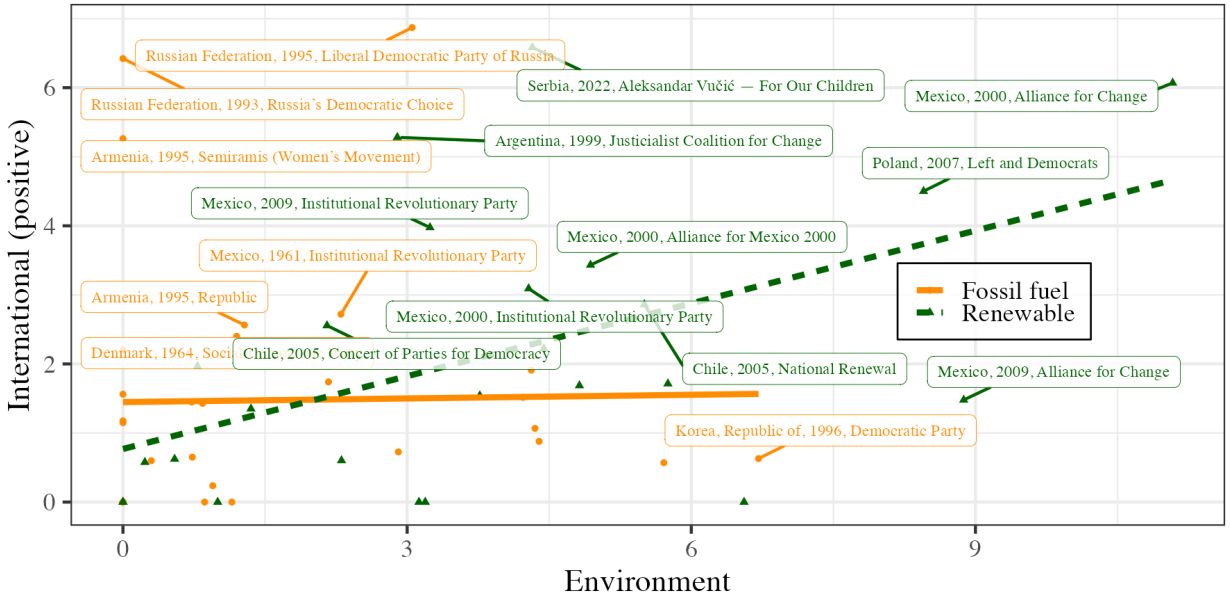


Figure 6: Internationalism and environmentalism by party: Association between political party stances on international actors and environmentalism. Points represent party platforms on two dimensions. Select party-years labeled. Data on party platforms from Lehmann (2024); only parties in low- and low-middle income countries with greater than 10% of national vote share included.

alism by 0.26 pts ($mean = 2.1$); the opposite is true for fossil fuel projects, which decrease environmentalism (-0.15) and internationalism (-0.7). This aligns with prior work on local political resistance to international funding for fossil fuels and environmentally costly projects (Hadden, 2015; Nielson & Tierney, 2003) and the tension in international funders supporting both fossil fuels and renewables (Goes & Chapman, 2024).

The relationship reflects underlying conditions that encourage politicians to shift preferences towards friendlier environmental policies if they are internationally aligned, or against environmental concerns when they oppose international cooperation. This association may be made stronger when international actors fund energy projects that support environmentally sensitive policies.

A. Environmentalism, internationalism, and World Bank energy projects



B. OLS estimates for environmentalism, internationalism, and World Bank energy projects

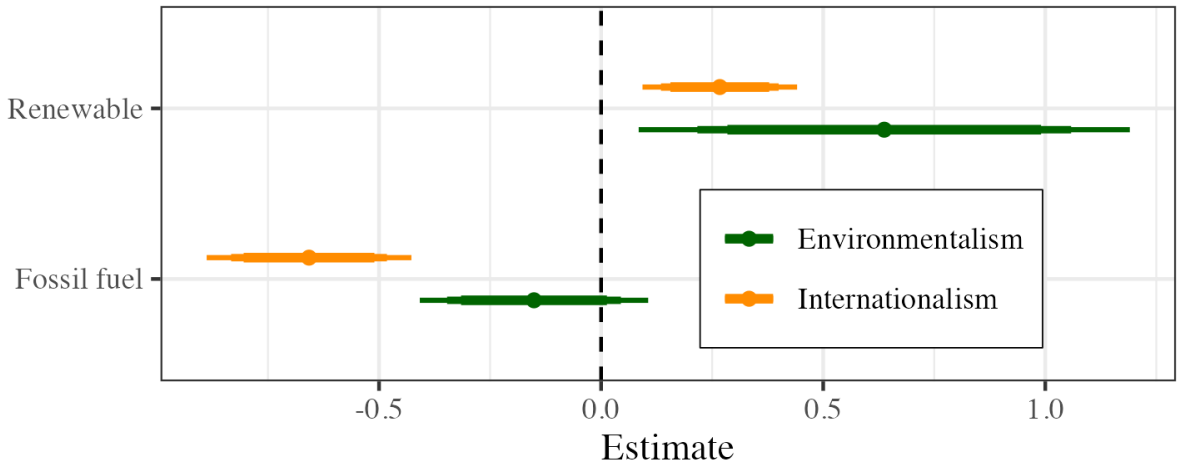


Figure 7: Party internationalism and environmentalism by World Bank energy projects: Top panel: association between political party stances on international actors and environmentalism. Points represent party platforms on two dimensions. Orange circles indicate party platforms for countries that have received a fossil fuel project from the World Bank in the prior five years; green triangles parties in countries that have received a renewable project over the last five years. Green dashed line indicates fitted relationship between environmentalism and internationalism for parties in countries that have received renewable energy projects; orange solid line fossil fuel projects. Select party-years labeled. Data on party platforms from Lehmann (2024); only parties in low- and low-middle income countries with greater than 10% of national vote share included. World Bank data coded by author. Bottom panel: correlation between environmentalism/internationalism and receiving a World Bank renewable or fossil fuel project (five year rolling average). OLS within-country estimates with robust standard errors.

3.4.2 Illustrative cases: South Africa and Indonesia

Two case studies illustrate the portability and limits of the theoretical framework. South Africa and Indonesia were two of the first countries to sign Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) with major Western donors.[15] These partnerships aim to address inequities in the energy transition by subsidizing renewable energy investment and the decommissioning of fossil fuel infrastructure. Across countries, JETPs channel funds from wealthy to poorer nations. Within countries, they support the creation of renewable energy jobs in communities that formerly depended on fossil fuel industries. The two countries also both held national elections in 2024 and have strong coal sectors. However, the influence of the international community's renewable energy push on domestic politics in each country differs dramatically. South Africa's experience reveals the influence of international donors on its coal industry. Indonesia, by contrast, presents a case where political parties lack clear divisions on either international engagement or environmental policy.

South Africa is the seventh largest coal producer and consumer globally. Coal and the coal miner union is a pillar of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement and the movement's legacy party, the African National Congress (ANC), which has been in power since the fall of the apartheid regime in 1994 (Hochstetler, 2020). The ANC signed the first Just Energy Transitional Partnership with donor countries at the 2021 Conference of Parties (COP26), with donors pledging $8.5 billion to support South Africa's decarbonization. The primary target of the JETP was South Africa's coal sector, a historical ANC constituency, and the electricity utility, Eskom, a major power player in South African politics.

Yet despite signing the agreement, the ANC showed little urgency in following through. The government slow-walked the JETP's implementation, calling the policy a "foreign concept" (Chilenga-Butao & Holl, 2024, 28) and publicly railing that "Africa must not succumb

[15] Along with Senegal and Vietnam.

to encirclement by developed economies that continue to put pressure on our continent to move away from all forms of fossil fuels at a pace and scale determined by them" (Chilenga-Butao & Holl, 2024, 28). The ANC's reluctance to engage fully with Western donors on the energy transition, despite signing the JETP, is in line with the party's international economic policies (Cormier, 2024) and its longstanding view of China as an ideological partner (Jones, 2026).

Meanwhile, rolling blackouts grew more frequent as the country's aging electrical grid deteriorated. The 2024 general elections brought energy stability and the green transition to the center of political debate. The main opposition parties, led by the Democratic Alliance (DA), made the energy transition a central part of their electoral platform, pledging to "move away from reliance on Eskom and increase the usage of renewable energy sources" (Alliance, 2024) and directly supporting the JETP while blaming the ANC for its lack of implementation. The ANC was forced to deny rumors that it had ordered the national electric utility to reduce load-shedding, potentially by using lower-quality, higher-polluting fuel, in the lead up to the elections (Reuters, 2024) but openly walked back its decommissioning of coal-fired power stations (the primary target of the JETP) to "help minimise rolling electricity outages" (Reuters, 2023).

Load-shedding was associated with lower ANC vote share in the 2024 national elections (Wack, 2024); social media analysis in South Africa showed citizens blamed the ANC for electricity blackouts in the lead-up to elections (Gwaka, 2025). The ANC lost its electoral majority for the first time in South Africa's democratic history and was forced to form a government with the opposition party, DA. From its position inside the ruling coalition, the DA continued to press for a faster energy transition supported by the Western international community (Mileham, 2026b,a) and antagonized the Chinese by visiting Taiwan (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of South Africa, 2025). In South Africa, then, the energy transition and international support for renewables became a clear cleavage

between the parties competing in the 2024 election; Indonesia's experience, by contrast, shows what happens when no such partisan divide exists.

Climate policy was not a main issue in Indonesia's 2024 election[16] and, while environmental concerns are salient to Indonesians, Hsiao & Kuipers (2025) find that other policy issues dominate. Elected politicians also consistently underestimate the importance of climate to constituents and, more significantly, are beholden to local elites with vested interests in continued coal production (Hsiao & Kuipers, 2025). Historically, high fuel subsidies have also decreased incentives to develop a robust renewable sector (Winters & Cawvey, 2015).

Using the unexpected announcement of the early retirement of an internationally supported coal plant in West Java, Cirebon-1, in the lead-up to the 2024 Indonesian election and high frequency polling data collected by Kuipers & Sumaktoyo (2026), O'Brien-Udry & Rowan (2025) find that citizens near Cirebon-1 decrease their support for the incumbent candidate while increasing support for challengers. In the absence of meaningful climate campaigning by political parties, this case maps more closely onto a traditional story of retrospective voting and anti-government backlash.

Together, South Africa and Indonesia illustrate both the reach and the limits of international influence on the domestic politics of the energy transition. Where parties are already divided along pro- and anti-international lines (South Africa), the JETP and the broader push for renewables can sharpen existing cleavages, giving opposition parties a clear issue on which to challenge incumbents and tying energy policy to questions of national sovereignty and donor alignment. Where no such partisan divide exists (Indonesia) the withdrawal of support for fossil fuels still generates electoral consequences, but through the blunter mechanism of voter dissatisfaction with local disruptions rather than through ideological competition over the transition itself. International donors can reshape the politics of recip-

[16]Fewer than 0.3% of all candidates in the 2019 local legislative elections mentioned environmental issues (Hsiao & Kuipers, 2025).

ient countries through the energy transition, but how the reshaping manifests depends on whether domestic party systems provide voters with meaningful choices on the issue. While space constraints limit this paper's ability to theorize the conditions under which developing country political parties choose to ally themselves with international actors amidst the green energy transition, this is a fruitful avenue for future research.

4 Conclusion

The green energy transition affects the domestic politics of recipient countries by altering the distributional benefits of energy investment. In countries where the ability to implement policies is tied to international funding, voters look not only to the policy position of parties but their ties to the international community. As donors withdraw their support for fossil fuel projects in favor of renewable energy, the economic benefits to voters depends on their representatives' links to foreign funding. The causal effects of withdrawal depend on the distributional costs (and benefits) of the policy, which in turn depend on the likelihood of international support for projects. In Kosovo, while expectations of economic benefits define voting in coal and renewable communities in the wake of aid withdrawal, a key distinguishing feature between parties is their closeness to the international community. Fossil fuel communities punished pro-renewable parties with international ties but not pro-renewable parties without them; the reverse holds for renewable communities. Withdrawing from fossil fuels allows pro-environmental donors to align their future commitments to their new priorities, but these actions may have longer-term costs on international influence in developing countries when donors' domestic allies lose ground.

While parties in the Global North have struggled in recent years to keep their campaign promises in an increasingly globalized world (Schneider & Thomson, 2024), the policies and promises of politicians in aid-dependent states have long been subject to the changing pref-

erences of outside actors. Countries with limited funds are reluctant to decommission power plants that are still able to generate power in favor of spending additional funds to invest in new power sources, particularly when these promises may be fickle. However, dollar for dollar, it is often cheaper to transition countries with less established fossil fuel infrastructure to renewable sources. For both economic and normative reasons, several partnerships between donor and recipient countries have emerged to ease the shift from fossil fuel production to renewable energy use.

The ability of international donors to maintain influence via their domestic allies through the green transition depends on their promises to invest in new projects, particularly in renewable energy. However, the credibility of international donors even *within* the context of commitments to renewable energy threatens the green transition (Michaelowa & Namhata, 2022). As of early 2025, the almost complete withdrawal of United States development aid leaves a giant fiscal hole in the budgets of developing countries worldwide; any prior US pledges to support renewable energy, amongst all other pledges, have been effectively wiped from the ledger. Uncertainty about international commitments is further enhanced with global energy instability, highlighted by the war in Ukraine, kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and the shut down of the Strait of Hormuz.

Climate-concerned donors also face challenges from an evolving landscape of donors. As nontraditional actors play a larger role in global international development, competition could alter the dynamics of aid withdrawal and the energy transition (BBC News, 2018). China's rise as the world's largest producer and exporter of solar panels adds a further layer of complexity: developing countries seeking to build renewable energy capacity can increasingly turn to Beijing not only for financing but for the hardware of the transition itself. This gives China significant leverage in the green energy space and positions it as both a development partner and a commercial competitor to Western donors. Environmentally progressive donors face a particular dilemma: their own withdrawal from fossil fuel projects

could simply open the door for less climate-friendly donors to step in — or, in the case of renewables, cede the economic and geopolitical benefits of the transition to rivals who are better positioned to supply the technology.

The political dynamics documented here point to a particular cost of international coercion in developing contexts: when donors withdraw support for fossil fuels, the backlash falls not only on incumbents but on the domestic political allies most closely tied to those donors, while parties opposed to international engagement may stand to gain. Foreign aid can advance environmental progress, but green commitments that ignore who bears the costs of the transition risk eroding the political coalitions on which durable climate cooperation depends.

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Appendix

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A Balance Tables

	No coal		Coal			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Diff.	SE
Solar PV	3.6	0.1	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Particulates	20.3	2.7	18.4	2.2	-2.0	0.1
Nighttime lights	1.0	0.9	2.3	1.1	1.3	0.1
Temperature	279.0	1.5	279.3	0.4	0.3	0.0
Population	75880.2	50867.2	116024.7	79018.7	40144.5	3744.7
Precipitation	79.1	13.0	72.3	7.6	-6.8	0.4

Table 5: Balance tests: Coal

	No renew.		Renew.			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Diff.	SE
Solar PV	3.6	0.1	3.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
Particulates	19.8	2.6	21.1	2.6	1.3	0.1
Nighttime lights	1.3	1.1	0.7	0.4	-0.6	0.0
Temperature	279.0	1.4	279.2	1.2	0.2	0.0
Population	84192.6	61125.4	68379.5	32359.2	-15813.1	1622.1
Precipitation	76.4	11.0	85.7	15.5	9.4	0.6

Table 6: Balance tests: Renewable energy

B Pre-trends

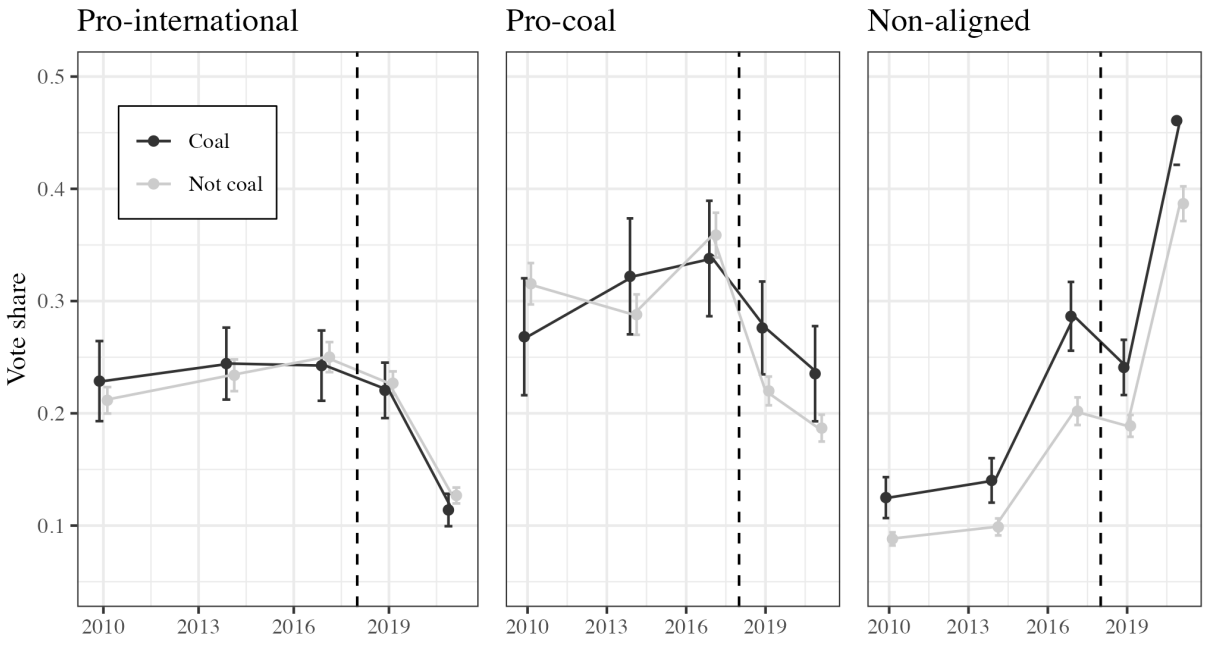

*Figure 8: Difference-in-differences (Coal): Coefficients for the interaction term, Post-2018*Proximity, using a 15km bandwidth of exposure (Proximity). 95% confidence intervals depicted. Three separate models estimated by party.*

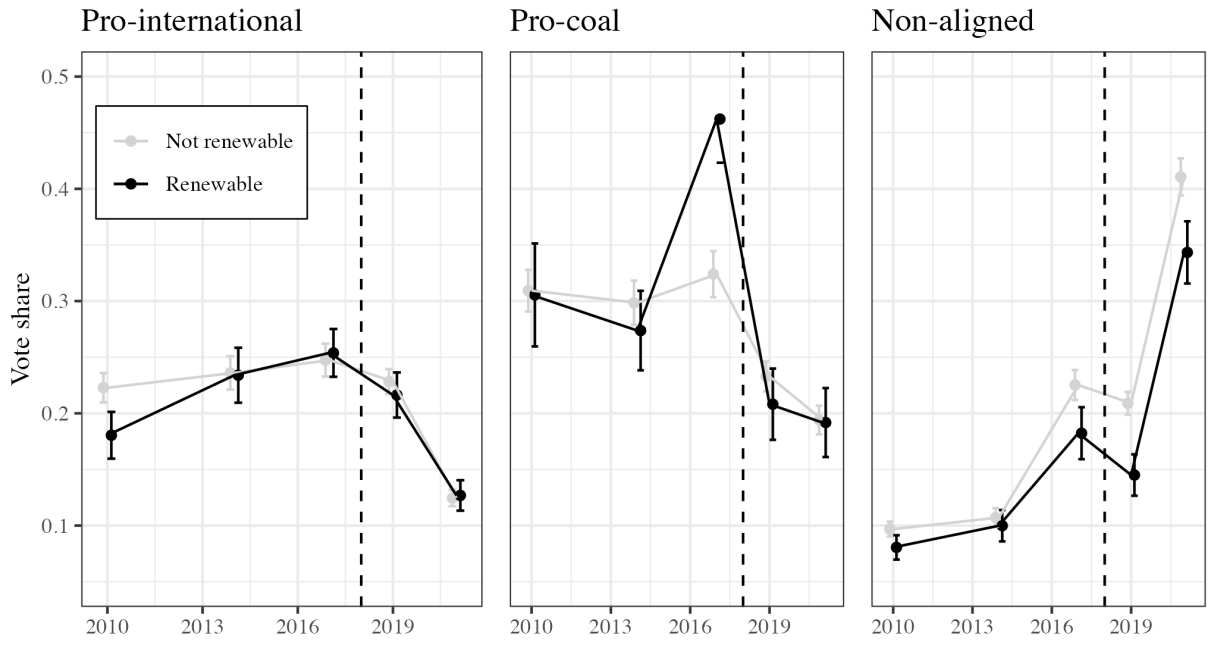

*Figure 9: Difference-in-differences (Renewable): Coefficients for the interaction term, Post-2018*Proximity, using a 15km bandwidth of exposure (Proximity). 95% confidence intervals depicted. Three separate models estimated by party.*

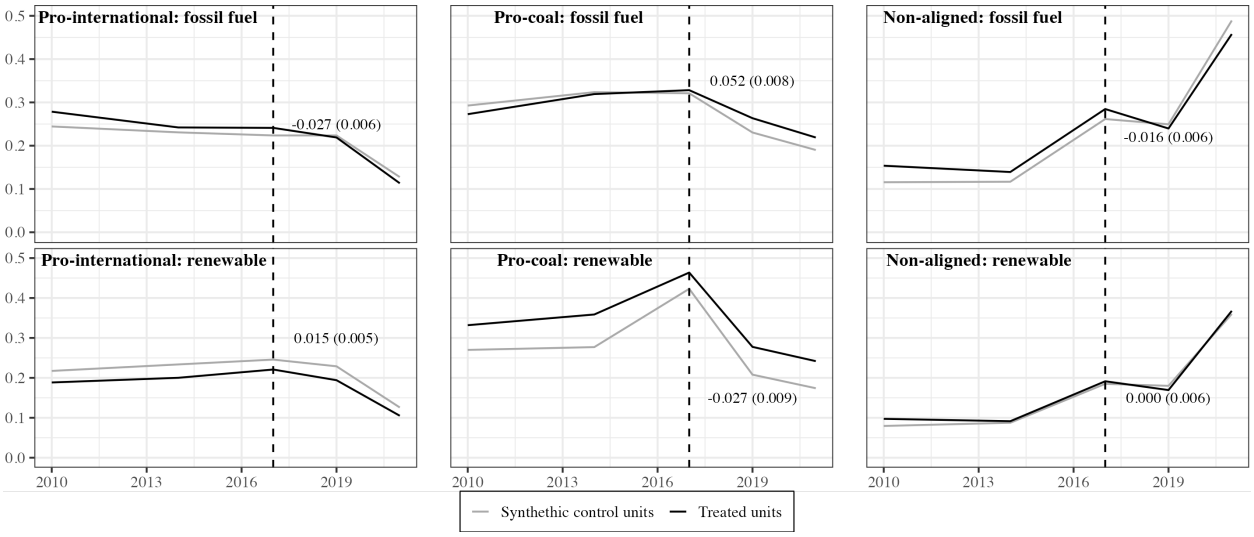

*Figure 10: Synthetic difference-in-differences: Coefficients for the interaction term, Post-2018*Proximity, using a 15km bandwidth of exposure (Proximity). Six separate models estimated by party and energy source.*

C Robustness

Panel A:		Fossil fuel			Renewable	
Party votes	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned
Post-2018 x	38.629***	-39.282***	217.104***	-65.895***	19.786**	19.786**
Proximity	(10.700)	(8.025)	(21.657)	(9.266)	(7.028)	(7.028)
Num.Obs.	5115	5128	5069	5115	5128	5128
R2	0.898	0.940	0.720	0.899	0.940	0.940
R2 Adj.	0.876	0.927	0.659	0.877	0.927	0.927
Panel B:		Fossil fuel			Renewable	
Party votes (log)	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned
Post-2018 x	0.337***	0.075*	0.068+	-0.340***	0.092**	-0.095**
Proximity	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Num.Obs.	5115	5128	5069	5115	5128	5069
R2	0.956	0.965	0.960	0.956	0.965	0.960
R2 Adj.	0.947	0.958	0.952	0.947	0.958	0.952

Table 7: Difference-in-differences results with polling station votes as outcome: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses; Conley standard errors in brackets. Top panel uses party votes as an outcome; bottom panel logs the party votes.

Total votes	Fossil fuel	Renewable
	(1)	(2)
Post-2018 x Proximity	145.053***	-88.362***
	(23.623)	(20.776)
Num.Obs.	3726	3726
R2	0.953	0.953
R2 Adj.	0.938	0.938
Total votes (log)	Fossil fuel	Renewable
	(1)	(2)
Post-2018 x Proximity	0.085***	-0.089***
	(0.025)	(0.022)
Num.Obs.	3726	3726
R2	0.961	0.961
R2 Adj.	0.949	0.949

Table 8: Difference-in-differences results with total votes: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Top panel uses total votes per polling station; bottom panel logs the votes.

	Fossil fuel			Renewable		
	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned	Pro-Coal	Pro-Intl.	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Vote Share	-318.283***	21.140	-190.821+	-464.348***	144.159*	-216.281*
	(80.531)	(50.339)	(99.547)	(80.159)	(65.253)	(95.674)
Post-2018 ×	-21.289	307.310***	23.404	-127.971***	-112.119***	-74.495*
Proximity	(40.387)	(36.394)	(41.916)	(37.874)	(32.856)	(33.155)
Post-2018 ×	-1.922	-257.253***	483.324***	46.843	-329.415***	541.069***
Vote Share	(67.368)	(51.875)	(75.828)	(68.871)	(51.911)	(73.349)
Post	-641.050***	738.073***	10.817	92.311	-202.836*	-184.155
Vote Share	(179.773)	(208.854)	(155.018)	(180.171)	(99.749)	(173.056)
Post-2018 x	690.586***	-383.529***	251.093+	280.088+	-57.479	140.295
Proximity x	(168.465)	(104.659)	(145.131)	(158.687)	(106.229)	(155.629)
Vote Share						
Num.Obs.	3726	3726	3726	3726	3726	3726
R2	0.954	0.955	0.955	0.953	0.954	0.954
R2 Adj.	0.939	0.940	0.940	0.938	0.939	0.940

Table 9: Difference-in-differences results with total votes and party outcomes: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

	Fossil fuel			Renewable		
	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-2018*	-0.036***	0.050***	0.021**	0.041***	-0.027***	-0.034***
Proximity	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	3519	3504	3479	3519	3504	3479
R2	0.888	0.874	0.866	0.889	0.873	0.867
R2 Adj.	0.870	0.853	0.843	0.870	0.852	0.845

Table 10: Difference-in-differences results with long-standing polling stations: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Excludes polling stations opened after 2010.

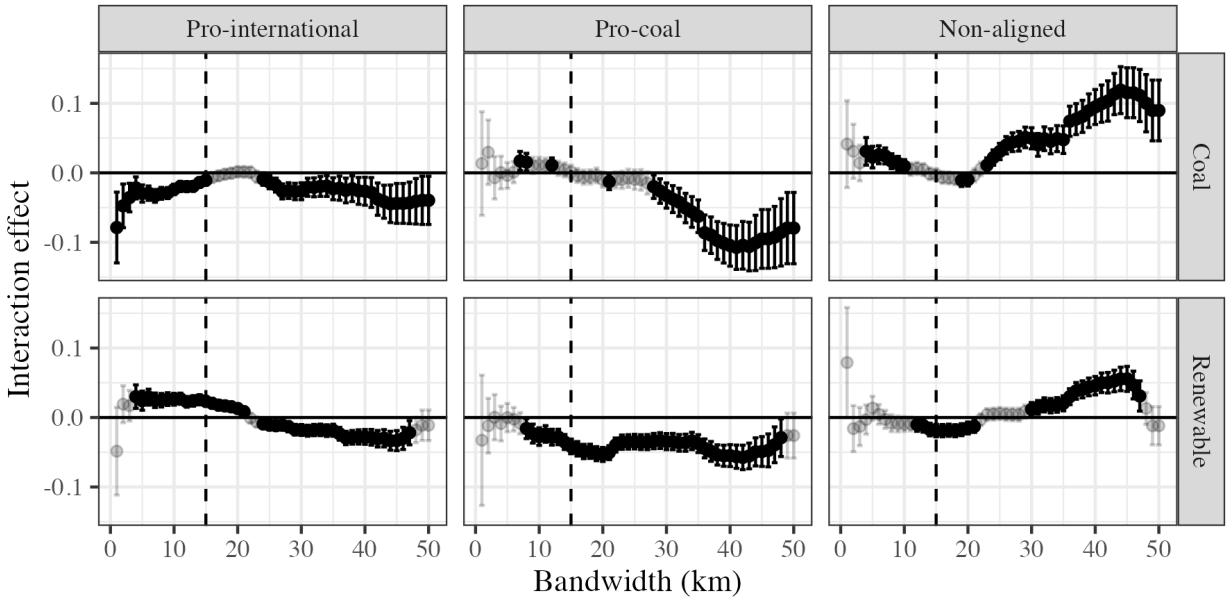

Figure 11: Difference-in-differences results by distance from energy: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal by distance from energy source. Confidence intervals constructed with robust standard errors.

	Fossil fuel			Renewable		
	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-2018 x Proximity	-0.036***	0.053***	0.025***	0.041***	-0.027***	-0.049***
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	3449	3434	3410	3321	3305	3283
R2	0.889	0.874	0.866	0.892	0.875	0.868
R2 Adj.	0.870	0.853	0.844	0.874	0.854	0.846

Table 11: Difference-in-differences results with donuts: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to renewable or fossil fuel plants after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal excluding polling stations within 5km of energy plants. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

	Photovoltaic potential			Wind power density		
	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-2018 x Suitability	0.114***	-0.032	-0.259***	0.000+	0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.027)	(0.040)	(0.032)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Num.Obs.	3519	3504	3479	3519	3504	3479
R2	0.887	0.873	0.868	0.886	0.873	0.868
R2 Adj.	0.868	0.852	0.846	0.867	0.852	0.846

Table 12: Renewable potential: One unit increase in solar potential (kilowatt hours per day) on vote share for a given party in a polling station in a given municipality (Models 1-3). One unit increase in mean wind power density (watts per square meter) on vote share for a given party in a polling station in a given municipality.

	Nickel			Nickel (no coal/renewable)		
	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned	Pro-Intl.	Pro-Coal	Non-aligned
Post-2018 x Proximity	0.033***	-0.015+	-0.049***	0.054***	-0.074***	-0.073***
	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Num.Obs.	5128	5115	5069	3204	3205	3162
R2	0.883	0.878	0.864	0.877	0.882	0.861
R2 Adj.	0.858	0.852	0.835	0.849	0.855	0.829

Table 13: Difference-in-differences nickel: DiD estimates for the effects of proximity (15km) to nickel plants and mines after the World Bank's withdrawal of support for coal. Robust standard errors in parentheses. First three models show full sample; second set excludes polling stations in proximity to coal or renewable plants for a clean comparison.

		Vote share		
Energy plant	Material	Pro-intl	Pro-coal	Non-aligned
Kosovo Energy Corp	Coal	-0.03 (0.01)	0.05 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Newco Ferronikeli	Nickel (Ore)	0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.01)
Glogovac	Nickel (Metal)	0.03 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.06 (0.01)
LED Light Technology Kosova	Solar	0.03 (0.01)	-0.09 (0.01)	-0.08 (0.01)
ONIX Spa	Solar	0.03 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
Birra Peja	Solar	0.02 (0.01)	-0.07 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Eling	Solar	0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)
Frigo Food Kosova	Solar	0.02 (0.01)	-0.07 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Solar Green Energy	Solar	-0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
Kitka	Wind	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
Era Energija	Wind	-0.01(0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)

Table 14: List of energy plants and mines in Kosovo: Names of plants and type of material produced. Coefficients for the interaction term, ***Post-2018*Proximity*** *using 15km bandwidth of exposure (****Proximity****) around individual plant, robust standard errors in parentheses. Fossil fuel sources highlighted in grey; renewable sources unhighlighted.*

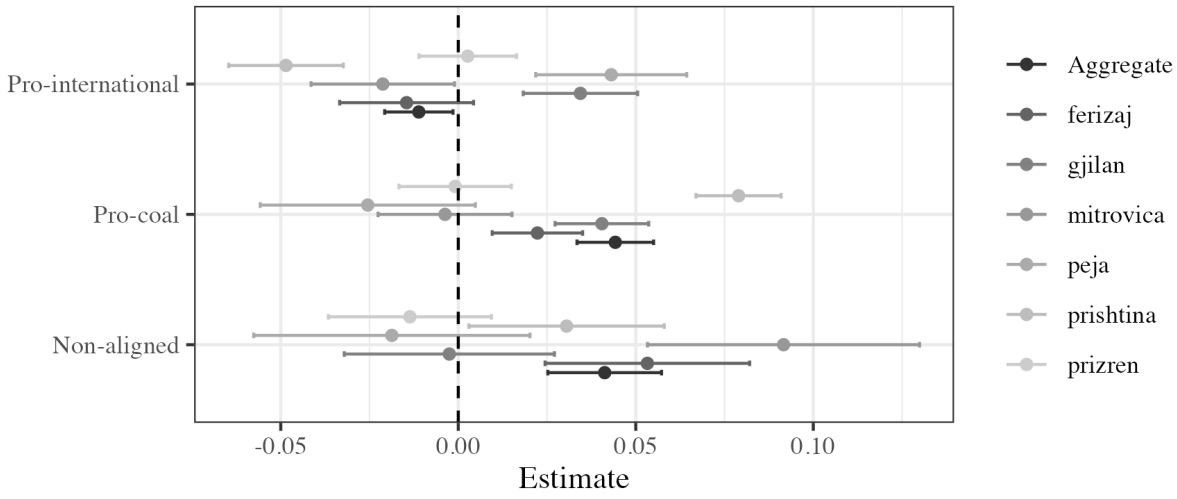

Figure 12: Aggregate and decomposed: Coefficients for the interaction term, ***Post-2018*Proximity****, using 15km bandwidth of exposure (****Proximity****) around major city centers. 95% confidence intervals depicted.*

	Excluding Serb municipalities					
	Fossil fuel			Renewable		
	Pro-intl.	Pro-coal	Non-aligned	Pro-intl.	Pro-coal	Non-aligned
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Post-2018 x Proximity	-0.035***	0.054***	0.017*	0.043***	-0.022**	-0.039***
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	3428	3413	3389	3428	3413	3389
R2	0.888	0.873	0.870	0.889	0.872	0.872
R2 Adj.	0.870	0.852	0.849	0.871	0.851	0.851

Table 15: Estimates accounting for Serb municipalities: Main models measuring effect of coal withdrawal on vote share for three parties in fossil fuel (left three models) and renewable (right three models) communities excluding polling stations in Serb municipalities. All models include polling station fixed effects and robust standard errors.

	Fossil fuel			Renewable		
	Pro-intl.	Pro-coal	Non-aligned	Pro-intl.	Pro-coal	Non-aligned
Post-2018 x Proximity	-0.012*	0.069***	-0.011	0.009+	-0.060***	-0.017**
	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	5128	5115	5069	5128	5115	5069
R2	0.886	0.893	0.868	0.886	0.893	0.868
R2 Adj.	0.862	0.870	0.839	0.861	0.870	0.839

Table 16: Difference in differences with covariates: Main models measuring effect of coal withdrawal on vote share for three parties in fossil fuel (left three models) and renewable (right three models) communities. All models include polling station fixed effects and robust standard errors. Controls include: Nighttime lights to account for a municipality's level of development, Particulates for pollution, Precipitation for variation in potential agricultural shocks, Night temperature for exposure to climate change, Population, Solar photovoltaic potential, and Wind power potential.

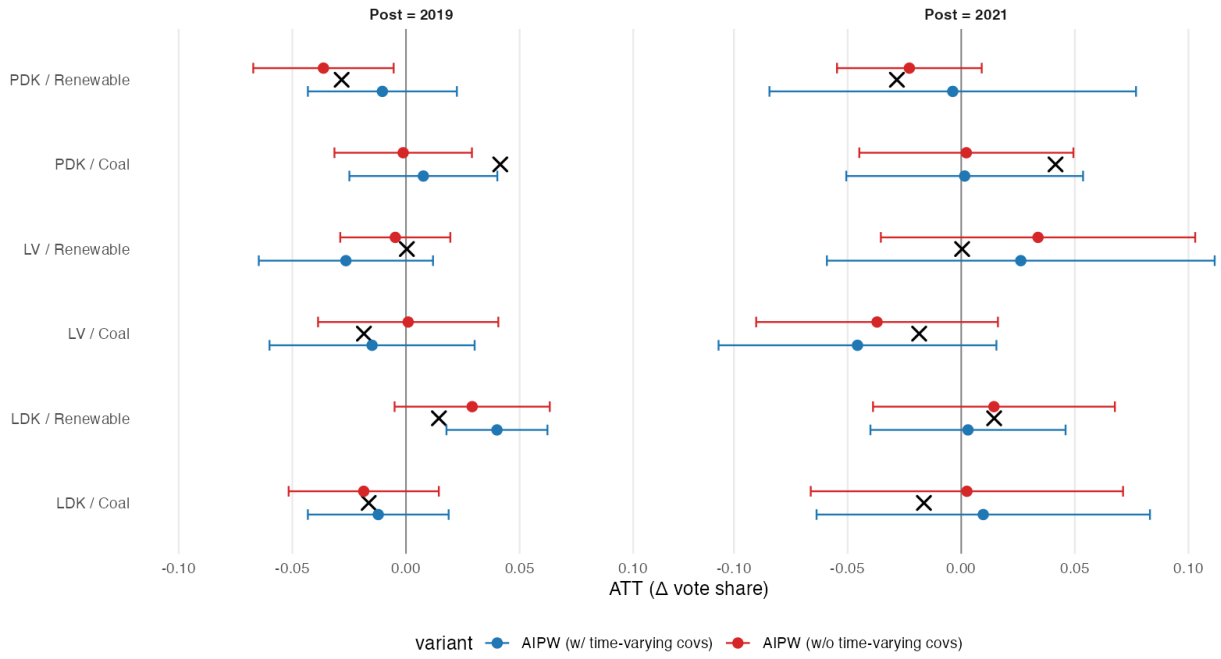

*Figure 13: Caetano and Calloway estimators: Augmented Inverse Probability Weighting with covariates. **X** marks main estimates from the synthetic difference in differences model.*

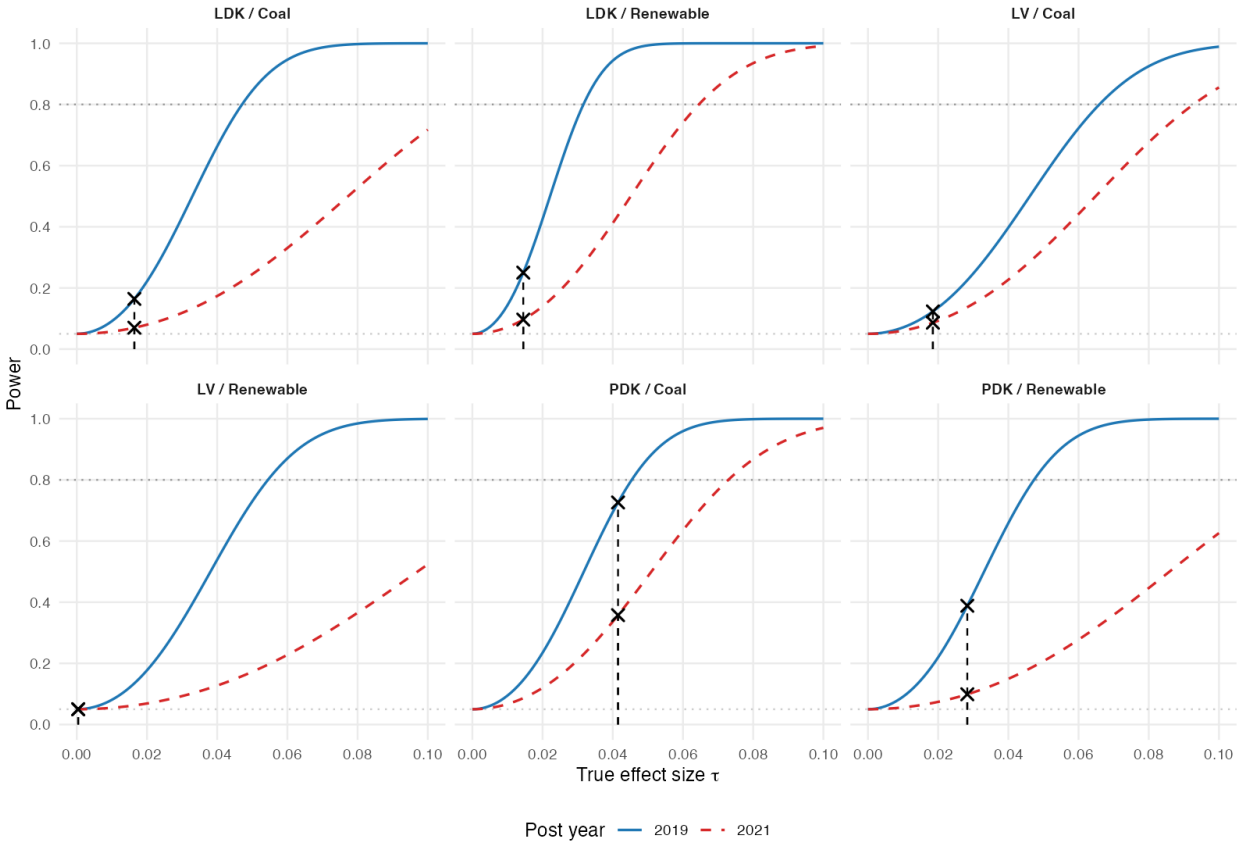

Figure 14: Power calculations for DiD correction

D Labor characteristics

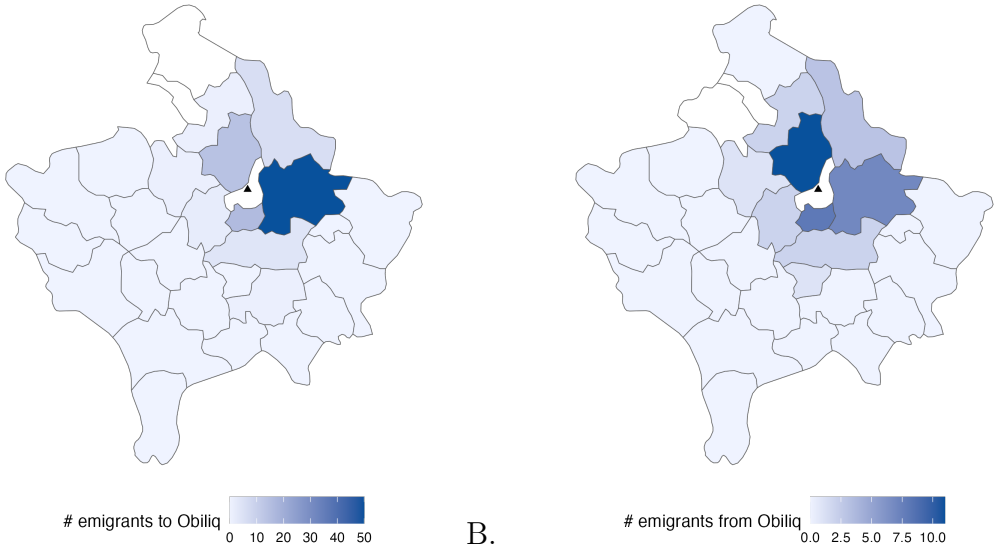

Figure 15: Migration to and from mining area (2014): Panel A shows number of emigrants to municipality with coal; Panel B shows number of emigrants from municipality with coal. Coal plant location indicated by black triangle.

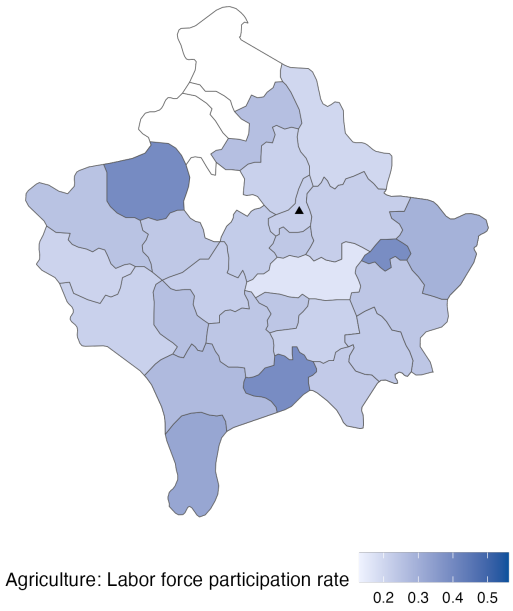

Figure 16: Labor force participation rate in agriculture by municipality. Coal plant location indicated by black triangle.

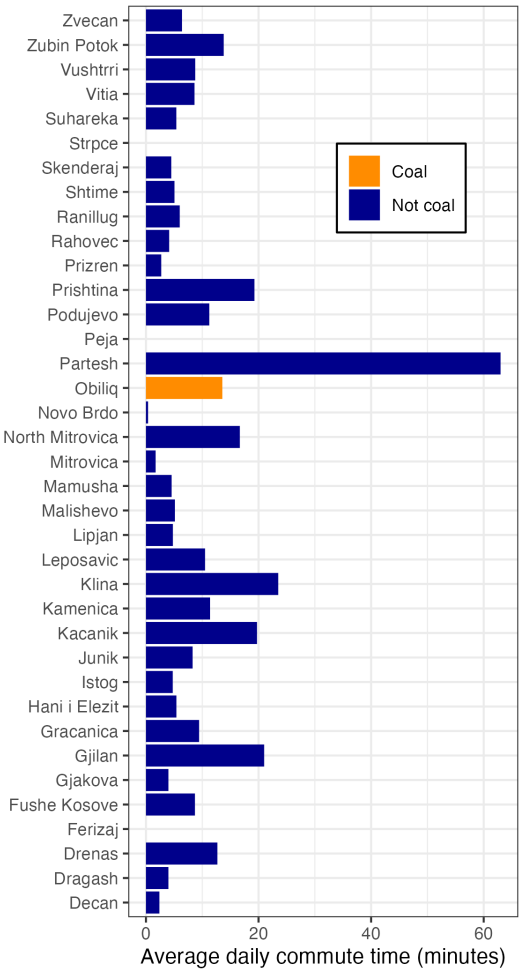

Figure 17: Average commute times: Average commute time in a given municipality. Data from the Kosovo Time Use Survey.

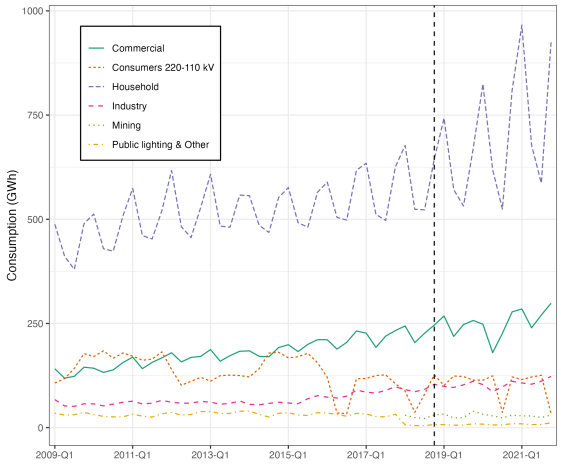

Figure 18: Kosovo energy use: Consumption of energy over time. Data from the Kosovo Agency for Statistics. Horizontal line indicates date of coal plant withdrawal.

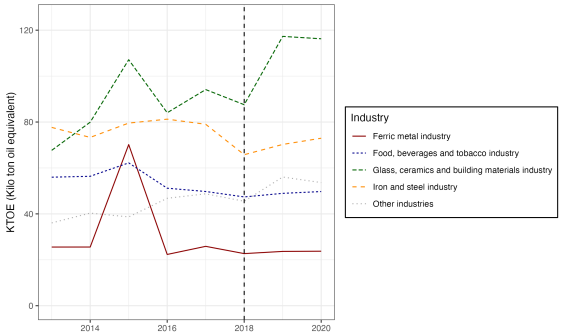

Figure 19: Kosovo energy use by industry: Consumption of energy over time by industry. Data from the Kosovo Agency for Statistics. Horizontal line indicates date of coal plant withdrawal.

E Scope conditions

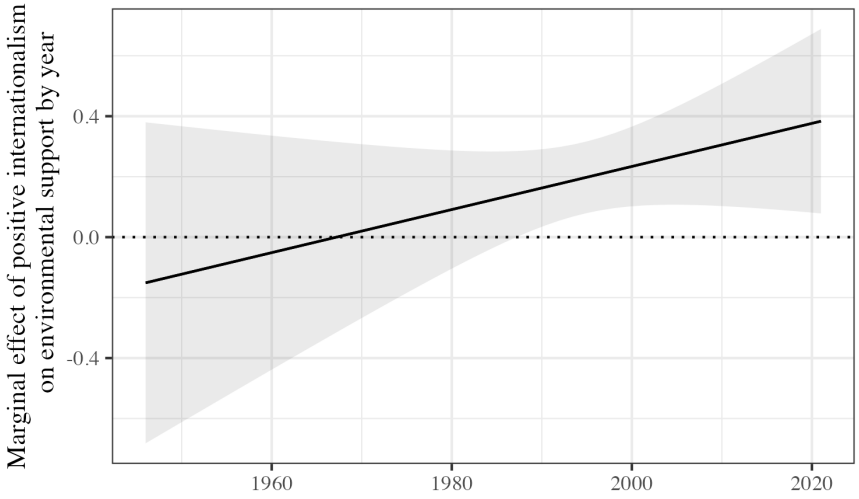

Figure 20: Party internationalism and environmentalism over time: Marginal effect of pro-environmental policy preference on pro-international policy preference over time. Data on party platforms from Lehmann (2024); only parties in low- and low-middle income countries with greater than 10% of national vote share included

	LITS II (1)	LITS III (2)	AfB 8 (3)	AfB 7 (4)	AfB 9 (5)	AsB 2 (6)	AsB 3 (7)	AsB 4 (8)	AsB 5 (9)
(Intercept)	0.242***	0.212***	3.180***	2.773***	2.849***	2.541***	2.661***	2.605***	3.912***
	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.032)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.009)
Climate	0.038***	0.055***	0.050***	0.026***	0.016***	0.041**	0.250***	0.096***	0.051***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.014)	(0.038)	(0.010)	(0.015)
Num.Obs.	29141	40261	25633	20360	23480	12254	13965	15283	22395
R2	0.008	0.018	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.005	0.001
R2 Adj.	0.008	0.018	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.003	0.005	0.001

Table 17: Public opinion on climate change and pro-international orientation: OLS estimates for association between climate concern and pro-international orientation (proxied by NGO and freedom of movement).

Survey	Countries	Climate Q	International Q	Estimate	SE	N
Life in Transition Survey II (2010)	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, Great Britain, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	Would you be willing to give part of your income or pay more taxes, if you were sure that the extra money was used to combat climate change (No...Yes)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.038 [0.037]	0.002 [0.002]	29139 [29105]

Life in Transition Survey III (2016)	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herz., Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Estonia, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Rep., Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Rep., Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	Would you be willing to give part of your income or pay more taxes, if you were sure that the extra money was used to combat climate change (No...Yes)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.055 [0.051]	0.002 [0.002]	40259 [40226]
Afrobarometer 7 (2017)	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, eSwatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Do you think climate change is making life in [COUNTRY] better or worse, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Much worse ... much better)	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Non-governmental organisations (None ... All of them)	0.026 [0.013]	0.005 [0.005]	20358 [20327]
Afrobarometer 8 (2019)	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Do you think climate change is making life in [COUNTRY] better or worse, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Much worse ... much better)	Which of the following statements is closest to your view? Statement 1: People living in East Africa should be able to move freely across international borders in order to trade or work in other countries. Statement 2: In order to protect their own citizens, governments should limit the cross-border movement of people and goods.	0.050 [0.050]	0.008 [0.008]	25631 [25598]
Afrobarometer 9 (2022)	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Do you think climate change is making life in [COUNTRY] better or worse, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Much worse ... much better)	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Non-governmental organisations (None ... All of them)	0.016 [0.006]	0.004 [0.005]	23478 [23440]
Asian Barometer 2 (2005)	Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Mainland China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia	In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Food shortage/famine; Natural disaster (drought, flood, earthquake, hurricane, etc; Land; Environment; Natural resources; Water supply)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.041 [-0.006]	0.014 [0.014]	12252 [12244]
Asian Barometer 3 (2010)	Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Mainland China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia	In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Mining exploration; Food shortage/famine; Drought; Land; Environmental protection; Natural resources)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.250 [0.013]	0.0380 [0.037]	13963 [13953]
Asian Barometer 4 (2014)	Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Mainland China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar	In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Environment/pollution/protection; Food shortage/famine; Drought; Land)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.096 [0.005]	0.010 [0.010]	15281 [15270]
Asian Barometer 5 (2018)	Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, China, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Australia, India	In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Natural calamities - floods, drought; (Environment) within this Paradigm but no clear answer; Environmental degradation/protection of environment; Climate Change; Pollution/Air Quality; Wildlife protection; Waterrelated problem; Hunger, starvation, Lack of food and Nutrition; Environment issues; Climate change; Forest fire in Goseong area; Environmental issues; Environment/pollution/protection; Water supply)	To what extent do you trust the following institutions... NGOs (Complete distrust .... Complete trust)	0.051 [0.053]	0.015 [0.016]	22393 [22380]

Table 18: Public opinion on climate change and pro-international orientation: OLS estimates for association between climate concern and pro-international orientation (proxied by NGO and freedom of movement); estimates with country fixed effects in brackets. All variables recoded such that higher values indicate more pro-climate and pro-international orientation.

F Process tracing

After declaring independence, Kosovo lacked safe energy infrastructure, and political disputes with neighboring Serbia made importing electricity difficult. Unreliable power cost the country an estimated $415 million a year, roughly 6 percent of GDP. Building a new power plant was one of the few issues on which the Kosovar government and all its international partners agreed.

In 2006, the World Bank partnered with Kosovo's provisional government to address the crisis. At the time, Kosovo was governed by the pro-Western Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës (LDK), a party with deep ties to international donors stretching back to its nonviolent resistance to Serbian aggression and its support base in the Kosovar diaspora (Visoka & Musliu, 2019). The Bank offered a partial-risk guarantee to help the government secure a contractor to build and operate a new coal-fired plant, dubbed "Kosovo e Re" ("New Kosovo"). From 2006 to 2018, the World Bank argued that coal was the most viable energy source for Kosovo — and therefore warranted an exception to its own ban on coal financing. World Bank president Jim Yong Kim stated in 2014: "Climate change and the coal problem is one thing, but the humanitarian issue is another, and we cannot turn our backs on the people of Kosovo who face freezing to death if we do not move" (Zëri, 2016). At the time, the cost of developing renewables exceeded that of coal even when environmental and health externalities were included (Olters, 2014).

The coal plant became a dividing line in Kosovar politics because it sat at the intersection of two issues: energy policy and the role of international actors in Kosovo's institutions. The three major parties each arrived at their positions through distinct logics.

LDK: following the donors. LDK initially championed the coal plant precisely because its international partners supported it. The World Bank's involvement validated the project, and LDK's identity as a pro-Western party made alignment with the Bank's position natural. But LDK's loyalty was to the international community, not to coal. The party's founder, Ibrahim Rugova, made international support a "key pillar" in his nonviolent resistance movement for Kosovo independence in the 1990s (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2006) and it remained a central tenet of the party moving forward (Visoka, 2019). When the World Bank and other donors shifted their priorities toward renewables, LDK followed. The party's trajectory on the coal plant from early supporter to eventual advocate for green energy illustrates how closely its policy positions tracked the preferences of international donors. For LDK, the source of a policy's backing mattered as much as the policy itself.

PDK: coal as a governing achievement. In 2007, PDK came to power and initially considered abandoning the project. The United States spent months persuading the new government that the previous administration's energy policy was essential. Once convinced, PDK embraced the plant as its own, with officials acknowledging that "failure to ensure a successful outcome to this transaction in 2010 is politically unacceptable" (US Embassy Pristina, 2009). Successive PDK-led governments announced imminent contractor selection and the start of construction, repeatedly citing World Bank involvement as proof of the project's viability. One minister pointed to the visits of three World Bank vice-presidents in a single week as evidence of the organization's commitment (GazetaExpress, 2015). PDK's

support for the plant was rooted in a straightforward calculation: Kosovo needed domestic energy, coal was the cheapest available option backed by international financing, and delivering the plant would be a visible governing achievement. Unlike LDK, PDK's commitment to the coal plant did not waver when international support shifted — the party had tied its credibility to the project and could not easily reverse course.

The non-aligned party: anti-imperialism over environmentalism. The growing opposition party Lëvizja Vetëvendosje (Movement for Self-Determination, referred to here as the non-aligned party) opposed the project, but not primarily on environmental grounds. The non-aligned party branded itself as anti-imperialist, with a core platform of reducing international influence over Kosovo's institutions (Visoka & Musliu, 2019). It affirmed the need for a domestic power source but objected to the terms of international involvement, insinuating that the US and other actors had blocked a joint Kosovo-Albania power plant out of fear of fomenting pan-Albanianism (Vetëvendosje, 2019). For the non-aligned party, opposition to Kosovo e Re was consistent with its broader message: the project represented exactly the kind of foreign-driven policymaking that the party existed to resist.

Civil society as a third force. Civil society organizations (CSOs) organized against the plant on more directly substantive grounds. They argued that the World Bank's environmental and social impact studies had been conducted to satisfy internal procedures rather than to inform the plant's design, and that no studies had examined the project's broader economic effects on Kosovo (Forum 2015, 2012). The Bank's own expert panel acknowledged that its members had "relatively limited knowledge of the situation in Kosovo" (Olters, 2012). KOSID, a leading CSO coalition, argued that "if the Government had been seriously committed to solving the problems in the energy sector, it could have been achieved with a much better combination of using energy efficiency and using alternative energy sources" (GazetaExpress, 2014). The World Bank pushed back against the CSOs publicly, with country manager Jan-Peter Olters dismissing their position as a "not particularly constructive coal-only vs. renewable-only confrontation" (Olters, 2014) and characterizing them as opponents of both the Bank and the government (Olters, 2013). This dynamic reinforced the political cleavage: the CSOs' arguments gave the non-aligned party substantive ammunition, while the Bank's dismissiveness tied it more closely to the governing party's position.

In March 2017, the government signed a contract with ContourGlobal, a US-based energy company. The deal required a publicly owned intermediary to purchase all electricity from the plant at above-market prices. The minister of economic development assured the public that the government would "not spend a cent for this project from its budget," claiming that ContourGlobal would provide 30% of the capital while international financial institutions covered the rest (Zëri, 2018). In practice, the price Kosovars would pay for electricity depended on the loan rate offered to ContourGlobal — and that rate depended on the World Bank's promised risk guarantee (KOHA, 2018b). Critically, despite over a decade of involvement, the World Bank had never formally guaranteed its support. The government "signed the contract without a response from the World Bank because they have been waiting for it for ten years" (KOHA, 2018a).

In October 2018, the World Bank officially withdrew. Renewable energy prices had

plummeted since the project was first proposed, and renewables were now the least-cost option even accounting for environmental and health costs (Zuvela & Bytyci, 2018). The withdrawal was not triggered by any failure on Kosovo's part to meet policy conditions — it reflected a fundamental shift in energy economics. The withdrawal sharpened the political divide. CSOs declared they had "won the battle with the World Bank" (Ahmeti, 2018). The EBRD immediately reaffirmed its opposition to coal. Without the Bank's promise of low-interest loans, project costs would likely be passed on to consumers. The outgoing minister of trade and industry warned that the withdrawal signaled Kosovo was "an unsafe place for investment" (KOHA, 2018a).

The government refused to cancel its contract with ContourGlobal, estimating 20 million euros in withdrawal penalties (KOHA, 2019). Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj insisted the plant be built to produce energy domestically, since importing from Kosovo's neighbors remained prohibitive (KosSev, 2018). For the governing party, abandoning the project meant absorbing both financial penalties and the political cost of reversing a flagship commitment to its supporters.

The opposition seized the opening. The non-aligned party made the ContourGlobal contract central to the 2019 parliamentary elections, demanding on its official website that a new government take steps on its first day toward "the cessation of any activity associated with the new power plant in Kosovo" (Vetëvendosje, 2019). The party accused the outgoing government of shutting off their microphones during a meeting when they tried to present "damaging information" about the contract (Arbresh, 2019). CSO activists, aligned with the opposition, argued that the losses from cancellation would be more than offset by gains in health, environmental standards, and cheaper alternative energy (GazetaExpress, 2019). The outgoing PDK-led government warned that if the opposition won, the project would collapse and Kosovo would pay penalties without receiving any benefits (Reporteri, 2019).

The opposition won decisively. The fate of Kosovo e Re remained unresolved; CSOs challenged the legality of the contract on the grounds that Kosovo would be providing "state aid" to ContourGlobal through electricity subsidies (Todorovic, 2019).

The World Bank withdrew its support because of an exogenous shift in energy economics, not because of anything the Kosovar government did or failed to do. But the Bank's years of involvement and its public clashes with CSOs created a politically salient cleavage that the parties exploited in distinct ways.

Each party's stance on the coal plant followed from its broader political identity. LDK, the pro-Western party, supported coal when international donors backed it and shifted to renewables when those same donors changed course. The party's position tracked the preferences of its international partners rather than reflecting an independent commitment to either energy source. PDK, the governing party, adopted the project as a flagship commitment and could not easily reverse course once it had staked its credibility on delivery; the World Bank's withdrawal left PDK locked in by both financial penalties and audience costs with supporters. The non-aligned party opposed the project less on environmental grounds than as an expression of its anti-imperialist identity; the coal plant was a concrete example of international actors shaping Kosovo's domestic policy, and the World Bank's withdrawal

vindicated this critique.

The 2019 Kosovo elections illustrate how international aid withdrawal can create political opportunities that sharpen the differences between parties — not by introducing new policy preferences, but by shifting the costs and benefits of positions that parties already held. LDK's trajectory is particularly revealing: the same party that helped launch the coal project became a supporter of renewables, not because its values changed but because its donors' priorities did.

G Coalitions

Year	Stance	Pre-electoral coalitions	Post-election coalitions
2010	Government	PDK AAK-LDK	PDK AAK-LDK
	Opposition	New Kosovo Coalition (AKR–PD–PSD) LV	LV New Kosovo Coalition (AKR–PD–PSD) LDK
2014	Government	PDK	PDK LDK
	Opposition	LDK LV	LV
2017	Government	PAN Coalition (PDK-AAK-NISMA) LAA Coalition (LDK-AKR)	PANA Coalition (PDK-AAK-NISMA-AKR)
	Opposition	LV	LDK LV
2019	Government	PDK 100% Kosovo (AAK - PSD Coalition) NISMA - AKR - PD Coalition	LV-LDK
	Opposition	LV LDK	PDK 100% Kosovo (AAK - PSD Coalition) NISMA - AKR - PD Coalition

Table 19: Pre- and post- electoral coalitions

H Media

The sample is all articles in major Kosovo and regional newspapers, Balkan Insight, Kosova Sot (Kosovo Today), Prishtina Insight, and Bota Sot (World Today). The corpus is 608727 articles from 2012 to 2024. Using keyword searches in Albanian, Serbian, and English, I identify all articles related to coal, renewable energy, and climate change. The geolocation information is not related to the location of the newspapers, which are all headquartered in Prishtina; rather, the information comes from the content of the articles. The underlying assumption is that national news coverage of an issue in a locality reflects the issue's salience to the locality.

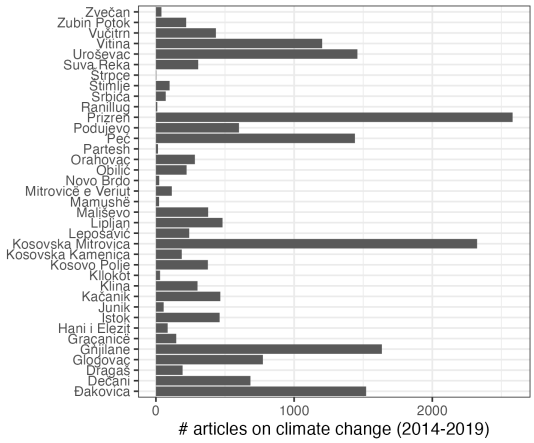

Figure 21: Number of national news articles that mention both climate change and a given municipality.

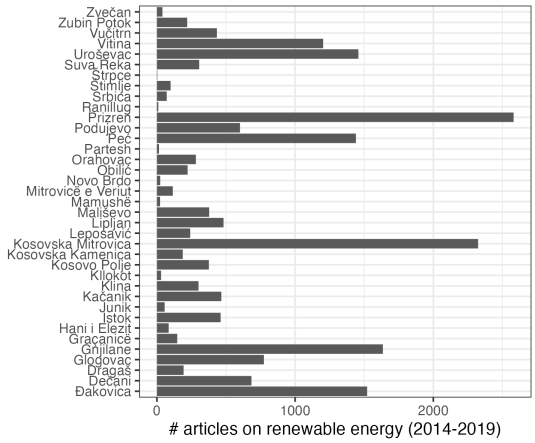

Figure 22: Number of national news articles that mention both renewable energy and a given municipality.

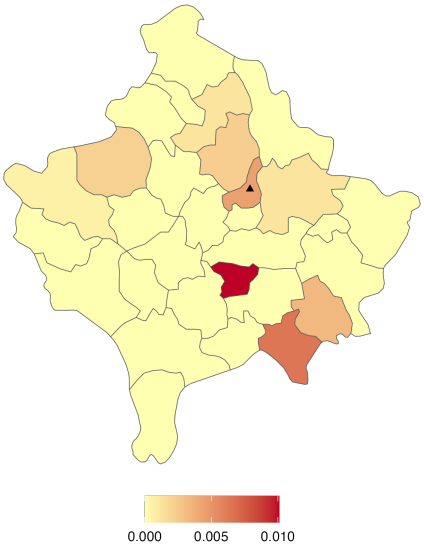

Figure 23: Proportion of news articles (2014-2017) mentioning municipality that also mention the coal plant.

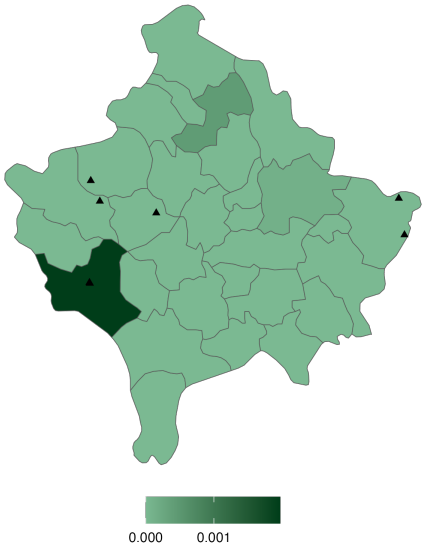

Figure 24: Proportion of news articles (2014-2017) mentioning municipality that also mention climate change.

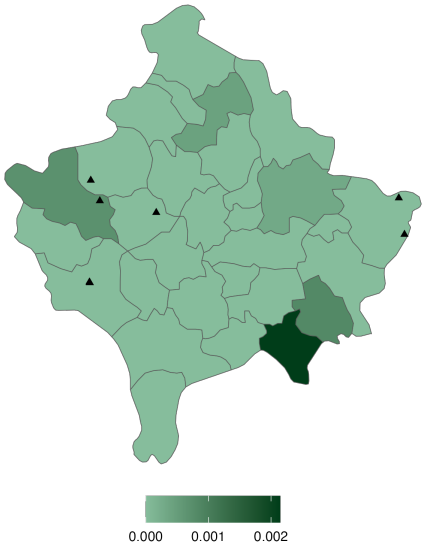

Figure 25: Proportion of news articles (2014-2017) mentioning municipality that also mention renewable energy.

I Stable polling stations

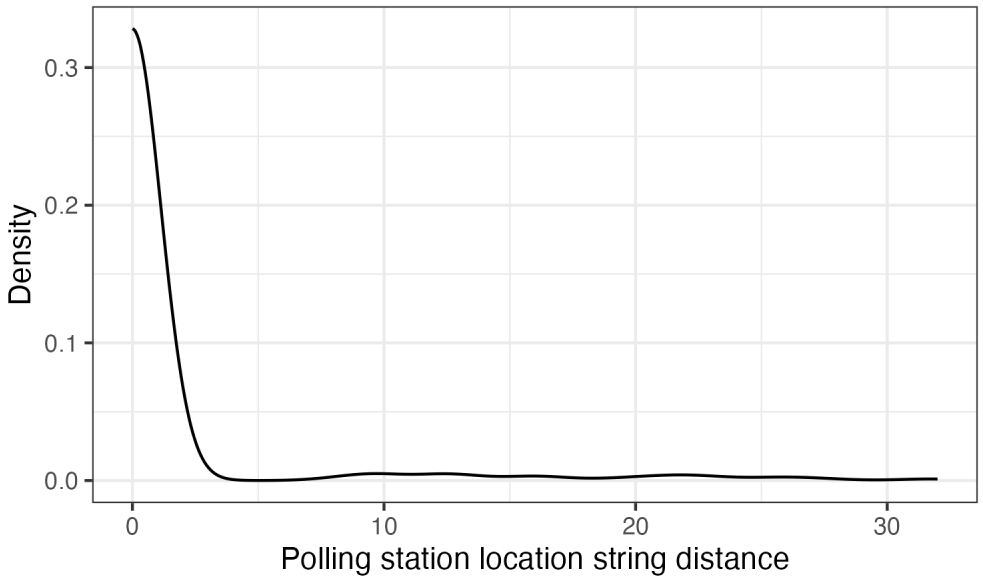

Figure 26: Polling station similarity check: String distance of all polling station location names from 2010 to 2021

J World Bank Monthly Operational Summaries

These data report progress on proposed projects in recipient countries each month. The frequency and consistency of reporting on project progress allows me to pinpoint exact dates at which projects are withdrawn or approved. Once the projects are officially approved by the World Bank, they are removed from reporting. The projects enter the data in the preparation stage; the average project remains in the preparation stage for four years. A substantial amount of bureaucratic labor and capital are expended on project preparation by both the Bank and recipient countries. Both sides have clear incentives to move forward with proposed projects. Figure 27 shows the text of withdrawn projects in the MOS.

Lebanon

Agriculture, fishing, and forestry

Sustainable Agric. Livelihoods in Marginal Areas (SALMA): The proposed Project Development Objective (PDO) is to expand access of small farmers to supplementary irrigation and increase protection of agricultural lands from soil erosion in targeted remote hilly areas. Concept completed on 5 December 2012. *This project is no longer in the lending program. Further reporting will be discontinued.* Environmental Assessment Category B. Project: P131431. US$24.0 (IBRD). Consultants will be required. Ministry of Agriculture Tel: (961-1) 821-900, E-mail: mkhansa@agriculture.gov.lb, Contact: Mohammad Khansa, Advisor to H.E. the Minister of Agriculture.

Energy and mining

LB: PCB Management in the Power Sector Project: The objective of the Project is to dispose of high risk PCBs and improve the inventory management of transformers in the power sector in an environmentally sound manner. Approval completed on 21 November 2014. Environmental Assessment Category A. Project: P122540. US$ 2.5 (GEFU). Consultants will be required. Ministry of Environmenta Tel: 9611981854, E-mail: manal.moussalem@undp-lebprojects.org, Contact: Manal Moussalem, Advisor.

Niger

Agriculture, fishing, and forestry

Agriculture Climate Smart Support Project: The proposed development objective is to increase food production and enhance resilience through adoption of climate smart agriculture practices in the targeted communities and households in Niger Identification completed on 18 November 2014. Environmental Assessment Category B. US$ 116.0 (IDA Credit). Consulting services to be determined. Implementing agency(ies) to be determined.

Energy and mining

Niger - Electricity Access Expansion Project (NELACEP): 16. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase access to electricity Concept completed on 3 February 2015. Environmental Assessment Category B. Project: P153743. US$ 60.0 (IDA Credit). Consulting services to be determined. Ministry of Energy and Petrol Tel: 22790645556, E-mail: as.toune@live.fr, Contact: Alio Touné, Chief of Staff; Nigelec Tel: 22720722461, E-mail: arzikam@yahoo.fr, Contact: Mahamadou Arzika, Secrétaire Général.

Figure 27: World Bank Monthly Operational Summary examples

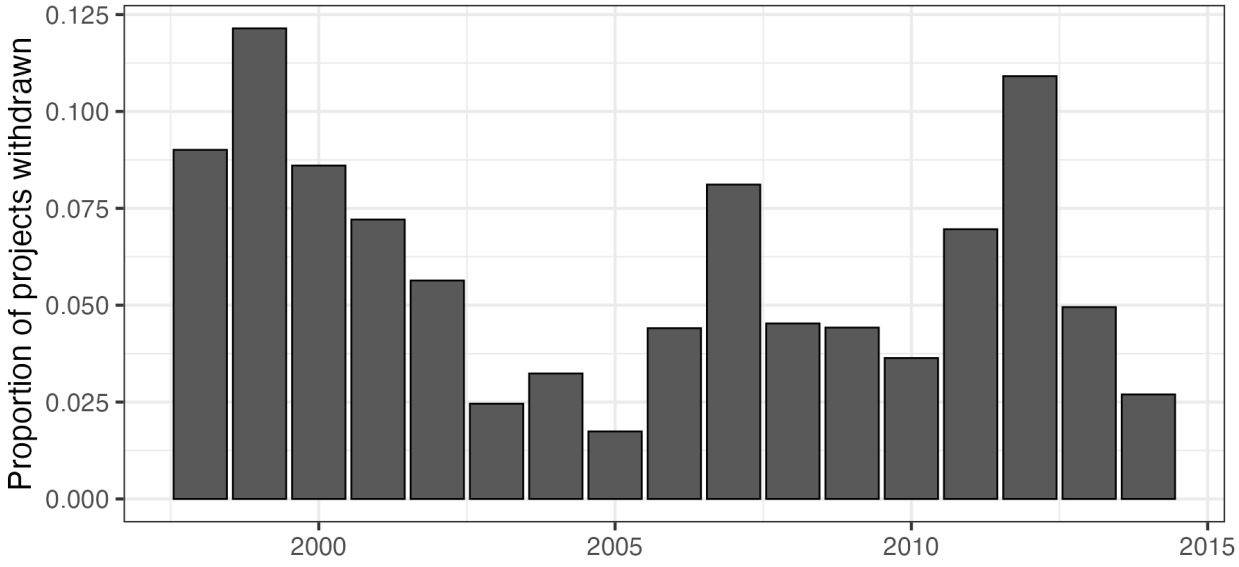

Figure 28: Aid withdrawal rates by year: Aggregated by year from projects ended from 1998 to 2015. Data collected by author from World Bank Monthly Operational Summaries.

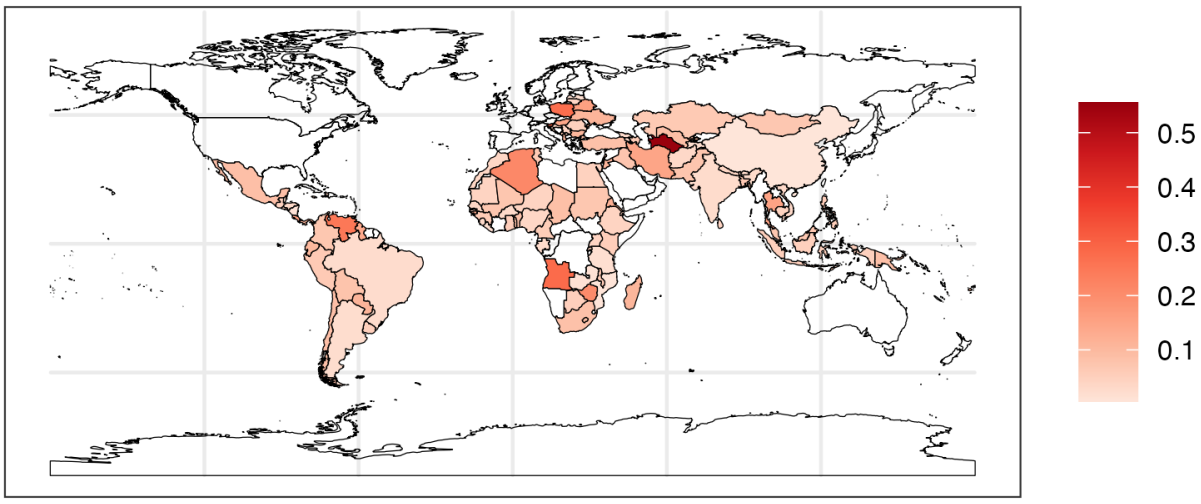

Figure 29: Proportion projects withdrawn: Proportion of total projects withdrawn by country.

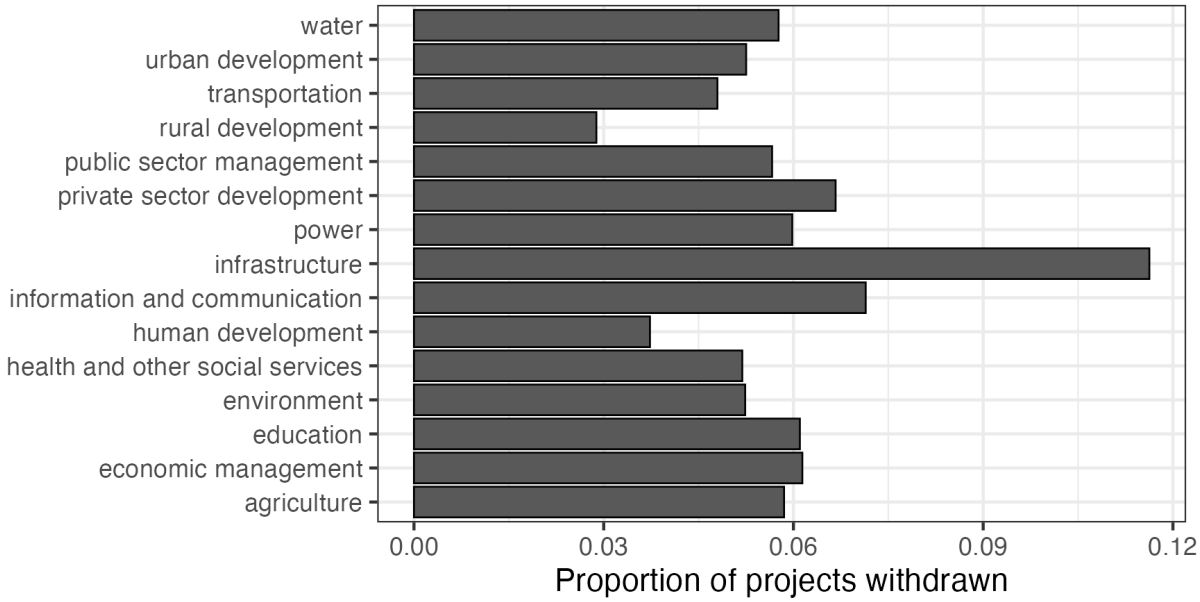

Figure 30: Aid withdrawal rates by sector: Aggregated by sector from projects started from 2004 to 2013. Data collected by author from World Bank Monthly Operational Summaries.

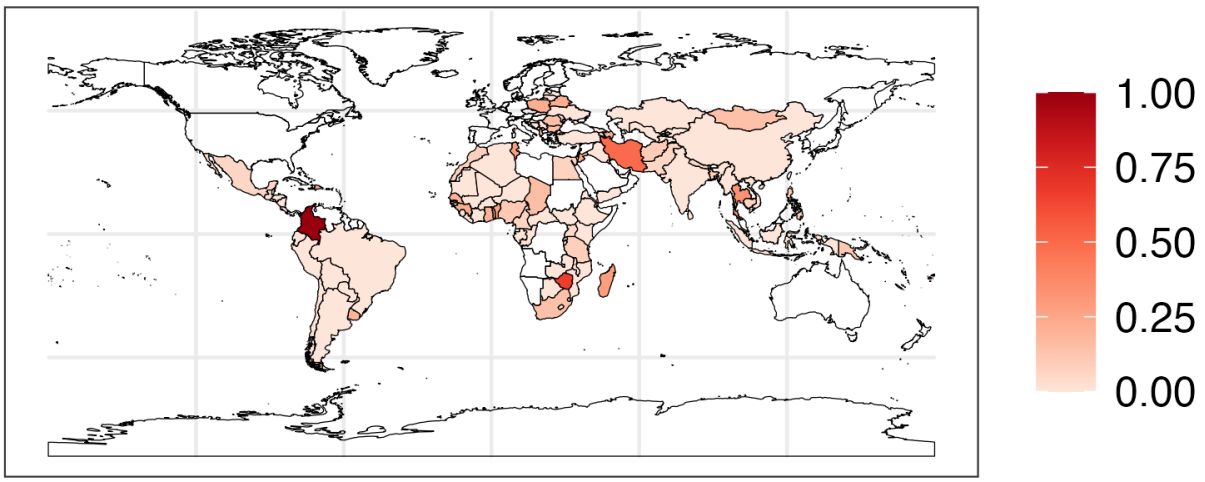

Figure 31: Proportion energy projects withdrawn: Proportion of total energy projects withdrawn by country.